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THE WOMAN'S CLUB

THE WOMAN'S CLUB

A PRACTICAL GUIDE AND HAND-BOOK

BY

OLIVE THORNE MILLER

AUTHOR OF

"LITTLE FOLKS IN FEATHERS AND FUR," "BIRD WAYS," "IN NESTING TIMES," ETC.

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TO THE WOMEN OF AMERICA.

A WARM lover of the Woman's Club as I am, I feel that I can do my sisters—widely scattered over our broad land—no greater service than to give them the "Open Sesame" to the most useful, as well as the most delightful, of modern "Institutions." To that end I have prepared this volume, aiming to present, not only an interesting account of the variety of ways in which the Club Idea has developed in our hands, but a practical guide in organizing and running a club successfully, with a working Constitution, and many hints and suggestions out of several years' experience.

If to old club members my suggestions seem unnecessarily minute, will they kindly remember that the book is not primarily for educated club-women, but for the vast army of women outside the charmed walls, and now clamoring to be let in. It is to these that I would "lend a hand."

OLIVE THORNE MILLER.

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THE WOMAN'S CLUB.

CHAPTER I.

THE CLUB IDEA.

THE first thing to be said of the club for woman, is that the name, having been so long the exclusive possession of our brothers, is somewhat misleading. Since, however, the language furnishes no other so exactly fitting, we have adopted it, with the intention of developing the club in our own way, and demonstrating that the Club Idea—like most other ideas—has a womanly side also.

The thought underlying the club is not so new among women as it seems. Beginnings are always obscure, and the idea of the beauty and use of association can be traced so far back as Sappho. This wisest and greatest of women poets, says a profound student of our day, gathered about her, for social intercourse and culture, the bright women of her time ; and since modern research has cleared her name from the slurs fastened upon it by a later degenerate age, women can neither have, nor desire, a nobler founder of their cherished association.

Almost in our own age, again, the thought stirred in the heart of Margaret Fuller, who drew women together for mutual intellectual aid and stimulus. She called her gatherings "Conversations," but they embodied exactly the idea of the Woman's Club as we know it, and the enthusiasm and delight of her circle, prefigure the emotions of club members of to-day.

It has however been reserved for our own day to crystallize the blind struggling after union and co-operation into organized societies. That this had become a necessity in our growth as a people, is amply proved by the result. No sooner had the Woman's Club taken definite form, and proved its right to existence, its helpfulness to woman and through her to society, than it spread like wild-fire over our country. The early steps were naturally slow; mountains had to be overcome; all womanly traditions were against it; ridicule, slander, opposition of friends, indifference of women themselves, hampered and clogged its way; but its hour had come, and nothing could put it down.

Ten years and more the few brave pioneers struggled and endured, before the ball was fairly started; but once rolling, its speed has increased, till now it is sweeping the country as irresistibly as a cyclone, and the rage for organization is something unprecedented and amazing. It took a long time to arouse woman out of her lethargy, but once her eyes are open, she walks down her path as resistless as fate.

In the outside world, as well as within her walls, changes have come like magic. Almost without her bidding, latch after latch has lifted at her touch, the higher

schools, the colleges, the professions; hardly a bolt has been so rusty or so antiquated that her slight fingers have not drawn it aside, till now she is free to go her way in the world, to learn and to grow broad beside her brother.

It is deeply interesting to note the different ways in which the spirit works itself out among women. Old and young, rich and poor, on all sides, often without suspecting it themselves, are falling into line with the woman's club. For the woman's club is simply and solely an organization for work of one sort or another.

Thousands, not frightened by the name, and seeing its usefulness in many ways, accept the club organization without disguise. But a still larger number, horrified at the word "club," which they associate with an offensive imitation of masculine ways, calmly and innocently walk in, under the pleasing illusion that their society is something radically different from that. They are drawn by several kinds of bait.

The "charity" bait catches many of our earnest sisters who must be doing something to relieve the world's distresses. Other timid ones are drawn in by the attractions of an "Alumnæ Association." The most conservative mothers in Israel cannot refuse to attend the simple meetings of old schoolmates at the same seminary (for not colleges alone have Alumnæ) where papers are to be read and old associations renewed.

The "Church Associations" and "Leagues for Christian Work," the "Temperance Societies," the "Young Woman's Christian Association," are composed largely

of conservative women, who have not the smallest suspicion that they belong to a club. But no matter how informally they begin, they find they cannot work without regulations; they have to adopt rules, they are obliged to elect officers, they are forced to work in parliamentary manner; and though they deny it with their latest breath, they are working on club lines, and are clubs to all intents and purposes.

The order of "The King's Daughters" is doing notable work of this kind, and enlisting the whole army of young American women. One "Church League" in New York, a few years old, and organized for home missionary work, has already several hundred members, from seven churches alone, with rolls and interest constantly on the increase. Last of all, the "Working Girl's Clubs" are bringing this army of our sisters into the fold.

The astounding growth of these societies proves, if proof is needed, that the spirit of co-operation is in the air, and that no woman can resist it any more than she could resist the sweep of Niagara, if she launched her solitary bark above the fall.

The only difference between the club proper and these various associations is that each of them has one special line of work, while the broader club has several. One and all are doing the same work, namely, broadening and elevating women, morally, intellectually, and socially; they are blowing the dust of centuries out of their eyes; they are teaching them to work together, drilling them in the ways long experience has taught men that concerted work must be done; de-

monstrating to them the power in union, and, best of all, making them know and love each other. And, by one path or another, all are steadily marching toward the united womanhood which alone can solve the problem of life for the sex.

CHAPTER II.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE CLUB.

In the blind way in which the world in general receives a new thought, no one has seemed to observe that the Woman's Club has been an orderly evolution, a simple and natural step forward. Its most generous critics have been wont to look upon it as a violent departure from womanly ways and womanly traditions, aggressive in its tendencies, and one more distasteful sign of the restlessness of the time, while newspapers delighted to ridicule, and the world to laugh over the supposed or imagined doings behind the scenes. In truth, if persecution of a sort particularly repugnant to women could have killed it, it would have breathed its last long ago.

Happily the club has outlived this phase of its existence, and the truth is coming to be known that woman has simply seized upon the club idea from a womanly point of view, and developed it in a purely womanly manner.

Home is—and ever will be—the chosen kingdom of woman. She could not, if she would, eradicate the instinct that makes her the home-maker of the race. The housewife of a hundred years ago, absorbed in the affairs of her small world, directing its varied industries

and administering its laws, overseeing the spinning and weaving, conducting the cutting and fashioning of garments, putting down its year's provisions from jars of jam to barrels of beef—in fact personally superintending the processes of what are now a dozen distinct trades—even this busy housekeeper was the true ancestor of her club-making daughter of to-day.

Beautiful and orderly homes all over our land, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the snow caps of Alaska to the Gulf of Mexico, testify that woman has lost neither her power nor her love for the making of homes, though her life is so different from her grandmother's.

Yet, how striking the contrast between the two! It would seem that nothing less than a moral earthquake could effect the transformation in the lives of women. If some prophetic soul had gone to our grandmothers, absorbed body and brain in the details of housekeeping, and proposed the woman's club, what would have been their horror! How indeed did they treat every poor soul who ventured to whisper that woman, too, is an individual—Mary Wollstonecraft, for example.

It is instructive as well as interesting to note the gentle processes of nature, in evolving from the devoted housekeeper of a past generation the club woman of our own. But while considering it, let us not forget that although housekeeping may be a declining art, home-making is an advancing one. Observe how gradually the change spoken of took place. First, the housekeeper was relieved of her spinning and weaving, machinery did both so much cheaper and better; cutting

and making of clothes followed, for the same reason; the preservation of foods became a separate branch of industry, tin cans dethroned the preserving kettle, factories emptied the cheese-press, dairies superseded the churn; every household process tended to consolidation.

These changes brought leisure into the lives of women, and with leisure arose the desire for improvement. Classes and Reading Circles—as giving better results than solitary work—were the first outcome, the very first move toward union on the part of women. Indeed the class, though it came so modestly and met no opposition, was a more significant step than the club. It opened to women the doors of college and university, though its best lesson was the "Sisterhood of Woman."

Close upon the heels of the class came, naturally, to the pitying heart of woman, unions for charitable work. Gradually, as interests grew and powers developed by use, a very large share of administering to the world's distresses fell into the hands of women, and by experience in this work she learned her second important lesson—the power of combined effort, the strength in union.

Now she was ready for the club, the inevitable next step in her evolution and the progress of civilization. But although, as has been shown, it was really the end of a series of revolutionary movements, it was the first conspicuous departure from the secluded home life of her grandmothers, and the world met it accordingly, with opposition and ridicule.

Holding with all her soul to the home idea, woman formed her club; trembling with doubts and fears, perhaps, for scoffs of husband and brother are hard to bear, but inspired by the firm conviction that she too was an individual, and upheld by a power that was stronger than she—the irresistible spirit of the age.

Nothing is easier than to discover the home roots from which the club has grown; the several interests of the association proclaim them aloud. The home is first in woman's heart; in her club she has her Home Committee, where in a symposium of home-makers thoughts are exchanged and methods discussed to the benefit of all. The education of her children is a mother's most serious care; the club accordingly has an Education Committee, where mother and teacher evolve together the best course of action. Books, Music, Art, belong to all intelligent homes; each has its Committee, and its special days for study. From the days of alms-giving at the door, to the modern "institution," woman has been moved to relieve the necessities of others; in her Philanthropic Committee she is educated into wiser methods, and introduced to the thought of the foremost thinkers of the age. The most conservative will not deny to woman the duty of attending to the "loaves and fishes" of the world; the Entertainment Committee has surely the deepest root in the home.

Is it not plain that the Woman's Club is a direct evolution from the home, and little more than a broader home-life, suited to our modern thought? The almost

instant response of womanhood to the club idea, so soon as it was understood, proves that the time was ripe, that it could not be delayed.

To many, indeed, it seems that it was an imperative demand of the age, for in the process of advancing from the time when "the husband and wife were one" (and that one the husband), to the time coming when husband and wife shall be a united two (and more than doubly strong thereby), there have been troublous times, and the world's affairs have gone haltingly, because half was undeveloped, crippled, unable to take its place and do its work—it was like a man with one side paralyzed. Before our civilization can progress farther, woman must be fitted to stand beside her mate and do her share. Her part will ever be the womanly, both by nature and by choice; her work will ever be done in the womanly way. She is not, and will not be, a rival or antagonist of her brother in the world's work. The period of antagonism is transitionary, the stirring of the waters before they settle. Woman must do her part not to clog the wheels of progress.

She will find her happiness in it also. There was a certain charm in the chivalry of the past; many look back and sigh for the good old days when a woman was cherished and worshipped. But there was another side not so pleasant.

What the club will bring to pass in our lives, is not easy to predict. One thing, however, is certain. If—as many students and thinkers are convinced—co-operation is the hope of our time, the establishment of the Woman's Club is the longest stride, and the most sig-

nificant movement of the age toward that goal. In the way of co-operation as applied to housekeeping, stands like a rock the woman's love of individuality in every department of her home. The club is fast undermining that feeling, with many others that belong to the past. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

CHAPTER III.

THE USE OF THE WOMAN'S CLUB.

THE club has been aptly called the middle-aged woman's college, and it does in fact offer to mature women some of the advantages their daughters reap from college life. Yet, although the country is full of clubs, there are still large numbers of our countrywomen who do not know or appreciate the value of this peculiar agent in their mental development. Some are indifferent, others are prejudiced, but the greater number are simply ignorant. It is to these I would speak of the usefulness of club life.

The Woman's Club, to begin with, is uplifting. It inspires a woman with a wholesome self-respect, and encourages her to help herself to a higher life; it lifts her out of the ruts into which she has allowed herself to settle, and surrounds her at once with fresh air and sunshine, in which the hobgoblins and chimeras which have haunted her—the spiritual bats and moles bred in darkness—cannot exist for a moment.

Club life is broadening.

Its first blow is at the petty prejudices which the old manner of living apart from her sisters has fostered in woman. She quickly learns in the club that hers is not the only true religious creed, her doctor is not the only worthy M.D., her "way" not always the infallible way.

She is soon ashamed of her narrowness, especially when she finds that the very arguments by which she has confirmed herself in her notions are also the stronghold of those whose conclusions are diametrically opposed to hers.

A club takes off the sharp edges.

Women, in their comparatively solitary lives—solitary as regards each other, I mean—where each one has been mistress of her own little kingdom, evolving and administering her own laws, have naturally grown in individual ways, all angles and sharp corners. When a number of them met in society they were like a collection of roughly hewn stones of all shapes and sizes. Every moment (to continue the figure) they were ground against each other, and each was wounded by the angularity of her neighbor. The result was a lack of harmony that has given a color of truth to some of the most offensive "sayings" about women. The club is the power that quietly but surely polishes off these rough edges and tones down the corners till women are, like the pebbles on the beach, all rounded and smoothed, and while each retains its own color and texture—its individuality, in fact—yet the whole may be tossed hither and thither by the rude waves of life, without friction and without injury to any.

The club, again, is a cure for "brooding," and magnifying the annoyances that every child of Adam, son as well as daughter, must suffer, for it places one's private and particular trial in its proper relation to the woes of the world, and shames one into admitting its insignificance.

Nor is that its only or its most important cure. By giving her something better to think and to talk of, it takes away her enjoyment of gossip, and by exposure of its cruelties and meanness, it destroys her relish for scandal. Further, the influence of the club is invariably strong as to the bad taste, not to say the idiocy, of tirades against men. I wish to put this emphatically, because it is not generally understood. Every club woman is the mother, wife, sister, or daughter of men, and in almost every case loves most loyally. It is a significant fact that nothing is more quickly frowned down and silenced in a woman's club meeting than a slur against our brothers. So far from working against man, the broader woman sees that everything she can do to elevate and enlighten herself works directly to the advantage of the whole human race, since in a way it is true that "she who rocks the cradle rules the world."

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and then opening before her so many avenues for action that she is often bewildered by the vastness of the field. Is it culture she desires? the clubs which have made culture their aim have accomplished marvels. Does she long to lend a helping hand to weaker or poorer sisters? the record of work done by clubs in this line is startling. Is her yearning for charity and reform? the list of results secured by women's concerted action will amaze her. In any way she chooses to turn, she will find the club record a noble one.

One of the best excuses for being that the Woman's Club has, is to be found in its cultivation of love and sympathy with other women all over the world. I will venture to say that every true club woman in America felt a thrill of deeper interest, and an unwonted nearness to her sisters of India, when she learned of the formation, in Bombay, of the first Woman's Club of the East.

If these things are effected by the club in the lives of busy city women, whose days are crowded with a multiplicity of duties, social, domestic, and philanthropic, who can rarely command an hour for study, and are obliged to do their serious thinking in wakeful nights; if to them the club is of so great benefit—and what club woman will deny it?—what must it be to the women of villages and small towns, where life is so much more simple, where social demands are few, and leisure for study and thought may still be found?

CHAPTER IV.

SEED-SOWING CLUBS.

An institution, as well as an oak-tree, requires that the seed shall be sown before it can take root and grow. Squirrels and blue-jays may bury the acorn that shall result in a noble tree in which the birds of the air shall lodge, but to plant the germ of an idea that will take root in the world-mind and grow to be an institution of power, demands mental qualities of a high order, courage, foresight, judgment, and withal not a little of the martyr spirit.

The more one thinks upon the state of public opinion twenty-two years ago, the more is he impressed with the bravery of two little groups of women, in Boston and New York, who dared to form the Woman's Club. And how wisely they did it, too, on their different lines. Women will yet crown these sisters who caught the first gleams of the rising sun of womanhood, and crystallized their hopes, their ambitions, and their prophecies in the Woman's Club.

Never in the history of the world has there been an institution that has done so much for women, not even our modern Christianity; and its work is just begun. Its progress is a stately march down the ages, with which sooner or later every woman will keep step, and

with results in the history of the race which no one can predict.

Each of the two pioneers, The New England Woman's Club, and Sorosis of New York, has a long and ever-increasing train of followers springing up over our land with bewildering rapidity. A list that is complete to-day, is to-morrow imperfect.

But a close student of the aims and work of this army of clubs will notice—perhaps at first with surprise—that not one of the daughters is exactly like its mother. It is founded upon it, it may copy its methods, but it is always tinged by the minds and altered to the needs of its founders. The germ, the seed-thought came directly or indirectly from one of the two named clubs, and they are emphatically the Seed Sowers. That was their work in the beginning, and that is their work to-day, although, of course, every seed that has taken root has become a new centre of growth.

Now that she has won herself an honorable place, and become a power in the world, we often hear from the sceptical the question: "What has Sorosis done?"

It is easily answered: Sorosis has planted the club-idea. She has cherished and watered it—with her tears sometimes, no doubt. She has aroused an army of women. She has overcome a whole dark age of prejudice. She has brought thousands of women together, taught them to work together, to respect and to love each other. She is doing it still, that is her work—and who shall show a greater?

To accomplish this she has always thrown her doors wide-open to all women, native or foreign. Excepting

that they shall be invited by a member, she lays absolutely no restrictions upon the number of guests. She provides pleasant rooms to attract her sisters. She offers them luncheon to refresh them, and an hour or two of informal chat to minister to their social nature. She furnishes music and recitations to entertain them, and lastly, she provides wide-awake papers to educate them.

But her greatest work is in *being* instead of *doing*. She offers to every woman who partakes of her hospitality, be she narrow or broad, the instructive sight of a large body of women of several degrees of intelligence and varied social rank, and of all ages, working together in harmony, enjoying themselves immensely, and growing in every way as the solitary woman cannot hope to do. Nine out of ten visitors go away enlightened and roused, and if their home is distant, a large proportion return to it to ponder, to talk with others, and to start a club of their own. Once a year, too, not to be exclusive in her work of enlightenment, she opens her doors to her brothers, admits the most prominent, intellectually and socially, of New York and its vicinity, by entertaining them at dinner.

But this pioneer club has other and perhaps more tangible results to show. She is the mother of the "Woman's Congress" or "The Association for the Advancement of Women," which, since its founding in 1873, has been carrying on the seed-sowing work of the present association on broader lines and over a much wider field, being movable and having members from Maine to California. On the work of this society I am

sure I need not enlarge, so well is it known through the length and breadth of the land.

Her latest offspring, of which I shall have more to say, though very young, with not much as yet to show, is of the same widely useful sort, an Association or Federation of Woman's Clubs.

In carrying out the plan of making a practical guide, I shall give a little account of the manner of conducting the regular meetings, and the sort of literary entertainment offered by the typical clubs, whenever it is possible. To begin, then, with the methods of Sorosis.

Sorosis, in many of its features, is unique among woman's clubs. In character it is—like its native city—cosmopolitan to the last degree. There one shall see women of literary, artistic, and professional fame, devoted mothers and butterflies of fashion, brilliant society women and workers for bread, the white hairs of age and the bloom of youth, all united on the common ground of womanhood. It is a sight interesting as well as instructive.

The meetings of Sorosis are held in a pleasant suite of four or five parlors at Delmonico's, on Fifth Avenue. On the first Monday of every month, from October to June (inclusive), there is a social meeting, to which members may invite as many guests as they choose, and on the third Monday of the same months a business meeting for members only. In addition to these are two annual entertainments: an anniversary luncheon, and an evening dinner, to which gentlemen are invited.

On the social day, ladies begin to collect in the large

parlor of the suite at twelve o'clock. This is an informal time, when members introduce their guests and chat with their friends.

Soon after one, luncheon is served, and from eighty to a hundred and twenty-five ladies gather around the small tables in the adjoining rooms, each with her guests and congenial friends around her. It is generally a little after two when the meeting is called to order in the large room, and the assembly entertained till five or six o'clock with music, recitations, papers, and discussions.

Sorosis makes a specialty of invited guests. Almost every woman distinguished in art, letters, music, or the drama, who comes to New York, is invited to attend a regular social meeting. Women prominent in philanthropic, or any of the world's work, usually appear first or last in Delmonico's parlors, to honor and be honored, and members have thus an opportunity to see and know the famous of their sex. To the anniversary nearly every woman of note within a hundred miles of New York is invited, and at the annual reception gentlemen of literary and artistic fame are also the guests of the club.

The literary entertainment of the club is in the hands of eight standing committees, which in turn offer papers and a question for discussion, usually of the most earnest and practical sort, and of the widest range, two subjects only being forbidden—politics and theology, or sectarian religion.

The social day of Sorosis is, and must remain, a sort of "field day," in which often more strangers than

members are present. And in this way the club is doing an immense and little appreciated work in educating and broadening numbers of women, and indirectly inspiring the founding of clubs all over the country. For twenty-three years a procession of American women has been passing through those rooms, frequently coming in narrow, prejudiced and curious, oftentimes sneering, and going out enlightened, broadened, and helped. The usefulness of this work to the women of our time, and through them to the nation, can hardly be overestimated, and fully entitles it to the name of missionary club.

Sorosis has been in successful operation for twenty-three years, and scarcely a breeze has ever disturbed it. This is a record of harmonious life that few societies of any sort can rival, especially when is taken into account the variety of elements that make up the club. For it would be almost if not quite impossible to gather together from the ranks of respectability a greater diversity in acquirements, beliefs, tastes, and social life than is to be found in the hundred and eighty or more that move amicably along under this womanly banner. Her connection with Sorosis has been to nearly every member an education in forbearance, in self-control, in unselfishness. Friendships have been formed and ripened into life-long attachments; in fact, the grand results of the work of that society flow on like an ever-widening and deepening river.

I have claimed for Sorosis that she planted the club-idea, and I do so because although the New England Woman's Club began practically at the same time, it

was organized on philanthropic lines and of philanthropic workers, therefore did not emphasize the club thought, and never met the opposition that beat about the ears of its New York sister. It was wiser, more politic, but it was not so distinctively a club. Sorosis fought that battle ; let her have the credit.

Of the work of the sister pioneer—the New England Woman's Club, I cannot speak fully, I know it so little. Its aims from the beginning were different from those of Sorosis, and its growth has, consequently, been in entirely another direction.

This club, familiarly known to outsiders as the Boston Club, was formed February 11, 1868, in the house of Dr. Harriot K. Hunt, thus antedating Sorosis about one month. But with so slight advantage in time, the two famous societies, parents and inspirers of all American Woman's Clubs, may almost be considered twins, though no twins were ever more unlike. The daughter of New England is a dignified, solemn association, with many serious ends in view, to accomplish which she works constantly, while her New York sister is—on the surface—a lively, dressy society, apparently doing nothing more than having a good time. Each accomplishes useful work in its own way, and they fitly embody the spirit of their respective cities, and are the best of friends through all.

The first object of the New England Club was to organize the women of Boston, who were working singly in the various fields of philanthropy, into a compact body, and thus to enlarge their usefulness.

The aims of this society were several : to provide par-

lors for use at all times, bedrooms for outside members, conveniences for luncheon, an intelligence office, receptions, and, lastly, what in most of Woman's Clubs is first, papers and discussions. In the autumn of that year it hired rooms and began regular meetings with one hundred and eighteen members.

From that time the club has worked steadily on, ever in the van of charitable work, ever investigating abuses, compelling reforms, starting useful institutions. Its record of work is a noble one, not the least valuable being the establishment of classes, which meet in the club-rooms and pursue different lines of study, literature, science, the languages, etc. At this day it is a very flourishing association, hiring a whole house, retaining ample quarters for all its work, including bed- and luncheon-rooms, and subletting the rest. It has regular fortnightly meetings, and a monthly "club tea," which, with the firm New England grip, it has kept simple. As a model of convenience and comfort it cannot be surpassed.

In the matter of literary exercises this club has always pursued the plan of having about half the essays—sometimes even more than half—delivered by outsiders, ladies or gentlemen. The calendar for one year had twelve papers by members and fourteen by various reverends and professors, selected with such breadth of interest that it includes Dr. Hedge and Henry George, with subjects as various as the speakers, from psychical research to divorce, and from the political aspect of the labor question to the recitation of original poems. The list of titles of the papers is conspicuous for the absence

of the ordinary literary and artistic topics in vogue in Woman's Clubs, and which one might expect in a Boston society above all. With the exception of four papers, three of which were by gentlemen, they are all of the most practical sort: Taxation, The Cost of Living, The Political Aspects of Mormonism, Education of the Chinese, etc. It is plain that the unspoken motive at work, unless it may be set down to chance, is the education of women for taking part in public affairs, placing intellectual and artistic culture entirely in the background, or, rather, leaving them in the hands of the dozens of small societies which abound in that mentally wide-awake city.

CHAPTER V.

THE CLUB OF CULTURE.

One of the most important ends to which a body of women can devote themselves is intellectual culture—the bringing of sweetness and light into our daily lives.

In the present craze for reforming society, and the eager rush after mere earthly advantages, when—

> "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind—"

it is imperatively necessary—unless we would be absolutely swamped in the material—that some of us should stand up for culture pure and simple, should keep in our memory the best thought and the greatest minds of the ages, to uplift and to broaden our lives.

Especially is this work demanded in the active young cities of the West, and, in fact, our sisters beyond the great lakes have worked out and presented for our admiration the most notable organization on this line. Such is the rage for improvement in all directions that nearly every Woman's Club gives part of its thought and its work to intellectual culture, but in the societies which have made it the sole aim it has had noteworthy effects, and none the less remarkable that they cannot be tabulated.

Clubs of this sort devote their entire energies to a

course of reading and study that shall educate and inform its members on all intellectual and artistic subjects. One of the most admirable points in their development is the faithfulness with which they have held to their one object. Club members know very well how hard it is to keep their association out of all sorts of outside issues. Dear, tender-hearted sisters, whose ears are open to the sorrows of all the world, try their best to drag it headlong into charitable work. We all know the "philanthropy fiend," who comes to the meeting loaded with documents and harrowing facts which she pours out upon us, hoping to turn the whole club into her narrow channel of work; and the active reformer who has discovered a new horror, and sparing us not one distressing detail, brings all her eloquence to bear to induce her sisters to put their united shoulders to that wheel; and the book-lover, who passionately urges her beloved club to resolve itself into classes for the solving of her special conundrum!

The heart of woman is easily touched, and old club members know how difficult it is to keep clear of these several demands upon them. So much the more praiseworthy is it in the Light-Seekers to refuse to be turned aside, and though no doubt they harbor among them the devotees of all these various interests, to keep steadily on, turning neither to the right nor to the left.

Sometimes, indeed, a club of this sort, when the feeling gets too strong to be stemmed, throws off a branch, a working reform club, which gathers to itself the charity-mad, and thus relieves the parent of a thorn in the side. This is wise, for whatever may be the value

of the reform work, the club of pure culture has its no less important use to perform. In this way has the Chicago Fortnightly, whose method of work I shall briefly describe, settled its internal differences on one occasion, giving, in the young and active Chicago Women's Club, a chance for any of its members to get all the philanthropic work they desired.

The Chicago Fortnightly, whose excellent record I wish every woman could read, was planned and established by a woman of rare intellectual gifts, and has through the whole of its existence kept up a thorough course of work and study, with never flagging interest.

The method which has been so successful cannot be too often explained for the benefit of young clubs all over the country. A competent committee decides upon the subjects to be treated and the members who shall prepare the papers. It then prints a programme for the club at large, giving these facts, and in addition a list of the authorities upon each subject. All this is done a year in advance, so that each member has an opportunity to prepare herself for intelligent discussion of every topic that shall be brought up. Also the appointed essayists have twelve months in which to inform themselves and write a paper that shall be worthy of the brilliant body before whom it is read. This carefully wrought out plan insures good work, and systematic mental growth far above that accomplished by desultory efforts.

The committees of the Fortnightly are arranged on a plan of their own. The work is divided into two courses, the Continuous Course of study, and the Mis-

cellaneous Course. One committee of five members takes charge of the Continuous Course, which has a representation one day in every month; another committee of the same number directs the Miscellaneous Course, which appears before the club on the alternate days. There is also a committee on receptions, another on rooms and finance, and a fifth and last on the library. At each meeting, on the first and third Fridays of the month, is usually presented one paper and a well-prepared discussion under appointed leaders. Since the club has enjoyed its own home, a light refreshment of tea and cakes is served after the exercises, which adds a delightful social hour to the regular programme.

The membership of the Fortnightly is limited to one hundred and seventy-five, which allows a careful discrimination in candidates for admission, and the Board of Directors, which has exclusive control of this matter, is rarely found napping. Hence it is—as it was meant to be—a choice and selected body of women.

It is to be regretted that it seems, to the managers of most of these organizations, necessary to exclude guests from their own city. New York and Brooklyn clubs appear to be unique in admitting to ordinary (not business) meetings, any number of visitors that members choose to invite. The Fortnightly, with a few specified exceptions, does not admit Chicago ladies, and this regulation is common to most clubs. There is doubtless a good reason for the restriction, but the influence of the club is thereby greatly limited, and perhaps the most important *raison d'être* of Woman's Clubs is the education and elevation of women at large.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REFORMING CLUB.

One of the most interesting developments of the Woman's Club is the set of earnest, practical women, here and there, who put into use what the club has taught them of the power of union, by taking hold of something and exerting that power. They hunt up some outrage—or, rather, it forces itself upon their notice—some misuse of power, as, for example, in a superintendent of an almshouse, or some employer's injustice to poor women, abuses in the public school system, defects in sanitary arrangements, and other things too numerous to mention, which men are too much accustomed to consider inevitable to meddle with. Into these sloughs of despond, hopelessly mixed and bound up with the mysteries of "politics," brave women of gentle birth and refined manners walk without shrinking. Ignoring the politics and attacking only the wrong, they win the respect of good men, and shame them into action—political if need be—while by exposing their evil doings they frighten bad men into reform. A bare list of what has been done by even a few of these courageous women would be of itself sufficient proof of the usefulness of the Woman's Club. Far braver are these knightly souls than the dragon-slayers of old, for

they did their grand deeds with the eyes of the world upon them, and were covered with glory in consequence, while those of our day receive neither glory nor thanks for their reward.

For the noble women who crucify their tastes, and do violence to all their instincts and traditions, by going down into the slums and grappling with its problems of filth and depravity, we cannot say too much. Their names should be written with gold on the walls of our temples, for without this service all the work of others is vain. We as a sex, we as a race, cannot be elevated until we lift up the lowest among us. Such is the mysterious tie that binds all peoples together, to one fate, that the lowest drags down the highest, and not until the lowest are brought near to our present limit can we hope to get much above it. Oh, believe it, my sisters! the race must be a true brotherhood before it can reach the heights we long for. A tremendous step on the way is the Woman's Club, for when we have established the true *sisterhood* the work is nearly done.

The external results of the work of these clubs is valuable, but far greater is its effect in rubbing out the lines between classes, in teaching us all to love each other, even our sisters of the slums, so much less fortunate than we.

Among the foremost of these organizations is the Chicago Women's Club; composed of ladies, refined, cultured, dainty in every way, they have accomplished, in that vast concourse of money-getters from all parts of the world, things from which men shrank back appalled, and they are just as much ladies as before, while they

are infinitely broader in their sympathies and in their knowledge for what they have done. Almost every club does some work of the helpful order, and many of them have a reforming committee of a mild type, which takes hold of some crying abuse, and sooner or later, if it does not get discouraged, carries its point.

A compensation that comes to the brave workers in this unattractive field is enthusiasm. So far from being repelled and disturbed by the terrible things they come in contact with, they only grow more earnest and determined, until in some cases it ends in total absorption of every faculty in the work they have adopted.

The Chicago Women's Club, of several hundred members, should almost be called an association of clubs, such power does it put into the hands of the committees. Each has its own meetings, undertakes and carries on its own work, public or private, and in turn furnishes papers for discussion and reports its doings in the general club. The Philosophical and Art Committee pursue their beloved studies in peace; the Education Committee, in addition to much other work, maintains a free kindergarten; the Reform Committee, which is so efficient as to give the club its character before the world, has done excellent work among children, the oppressed, the imprisoned in almshouses, hospitals, and jails, and among the wretched classes generally.

Although but a few years old, the club has already founded three other institutions: the Woman's Physiological Society for the free instruction of women in hygiene; the Protective Agency for Women and Children,

aiming to care not only for their pecuniary but for their moral interests; and the Industrial Art Association, with the object of introducing industrial training into the public schools.

This club has commodious rooms of its own, including dining-room and kitchen, in the Art Institute Building, on Wabash Avenue, occupying, with its sister society—the Fortnightly—a whole floor, and it meets there semi-monthly for literary exercises.

The subjects discussed in these meetings indicate the spirit of the club. To cite a few from the list: one Committee dealt with The Criminal and Prison Questions, the School System, and the Higher Education of Women; the Home Committee interested the members in various domestic problems, as the Sanitary Condition of the Home, Chemistry in Domestic Economy, The Influence of Women's Clubs on the Home; the Education Committee presented Technical and Industrial Schools; Philanthropy discussed Physical Culture, and the Problems of the Street.

The management of this association is almost entirely in the hands of its officers. All business, even the admission of members, is transacted by the Executive Board, whose enactments are never questioned, and this has proved a completely satisfactory method of work.

The six Committees into which the club is divided, have also almost unlimited power in their several lines, electing their own officers and reporting occasionally to the Board.

This association is especially catholic in its membership. Romanists, Jews, and Christians of every denom-

ination, fraternize with Atheists and Free-thinkers. Nor do social distinctions enter within these charmed doors. What the woman is in herself is a question of interest, but the position of her husband, or the length of her purse, the club cares nothing about.

CHAPTER VII.

THE UPLIFTING CLUB.

It is proverbial that woman is most easily reached through her sympathies, and it can therefore be no matter of surprise that many of her associations have rallied round the banner of loving service to others. Some of them indeed have adopted the now famous motto—

> "Look up and not down,
> Look out and not in,
> Look forward and not back,
> And lend a hand,"—

and all of them well deserve the name of Helping Hands.

They do not, like another powerful division of our sisters, assume the aggressive, and armed with the holiness of their cause, go out into the world of injustice and wrong, to fight every evil on its own ground. On the contrary, these clubs, convinced that the best way to improve the condition of people is to teach them to help themselves, take as their work the holding out of helping hands to their fellow-creatures struggling below them, assisting them to come up higher, to live better and broader lives.

They very properly begin their work with the poorly-

paid women laborers of our cities, teach them better trades or perfect them in the ones they have, and in every possible way fit them for better paid positions. At the same time they are constantly cultivating their minds and their hearts, instructing them in better ways of living and thinking, and bridging over the chasm that labor agitators would be glad to widen between the intelligent and the ignorant. Like most worthy effort, too, this works both ways, teaching the important lesson of the real sisterhood between us, no less valuable to the teacher than to the taught.

To accomplish their ends they establish classes for instruction in all sorts of useful arts that shall enable the members to support themselves comfortably, such as telegraphy, type-writing, book-keeping, and all the trades at present largely in the hands of women, as millinery, dressmaking, embroidery, sewing, cooking, and others.

Nor do they neglect the intellectual. To those bread-winning arts are added lectures on literary, scientific, and ethical subjects, classes in the common branches of education — the three R's — and even in grammar, French, elocution, and music.

A club of this kind must own or hire its own building for class- and committee-rooms, and it has besides, parlors for meetings, and often a library and other rooms.

One of these clubs, perhaps the best known, the New Century Club, of Philadelphia, has established a "Guild of Working Women" which has already grown so prosperous as to have a house of its own, with its own li-

brary and gymnasium and several hundred enthusiastic members. It has also either caused or fostered Industrial Art and Manual Labor Schools for public school children, and a Kindergarten Training School, over all of which it watches with motherly care. In addition to these it has opened, what seems to be imperative in every large city, a department for the purpose of helping working women to collect their wages.

Many clubs bend almost their entire energies to this labor of the truest charity—helping others to help themselves—and with the exception of the clubs of pure culture, whose members, let us say in passing, do their full philanthropic duty in other organizations, there is scarcely a woman's society, from Maine to California, which has not at least a working charitable committee, which carries on more or less of this "helping" all the time.

When the impulse to "lend a hand" became strong among our sisters of the South, and organized itself for work, it developed, according to their needs, a little differently from the Northern association. The earliest society in that part of the country is the New Orleans Woman's Club, a brilliant example of what a few women may do. Happy will be the day when every large city in the Southern States has one equally efficient.

A fact which guided this club into its peculiar channels of work is this, that the class they set out to help is composed mostly of Americans, of educated and refined gentlewomen, in fact, who "have seen better days." They are teachers, writers, journalists, book-keepers, artists, and others. The club began with intellectual

improvement, but the demands forced upon them have gradually led it to become a leading society of helping hands. They have classes in the various branches found useful in the New Century, and in addition a bureau for fitting and furnishing governesses to the scattered families on plantations. Another departure from the Northern way is subletting rooms in their building at low rates to members. They provide means also for the relief of the sick and distressed, as well as for the burial, when necessary, of the destitute in their own ranks.

Ever keeping in sight the purpose of intellectual culture with which it set out, the club publishes a monthly paper, and within a year or two has started, under favorable auspices, a branch society for study and literary work.

This interesting organization was represented in the Convention of Woman's Clubs in March, 1888, by an able and inspiring paper, detailing the work accomplished in the four or five years of its existence, not the least of which is a certain breaking down of the barriers of caste, which reports cannot show.

I have been thus particular in specifying the work of these clubs, because of the possible use to young societies, and to groups of earnest women not yet organized, in laying out their own plans.

The New England Woman's Club gave the impetus that has grown into this class of associations, and it should be regarded as the mother of all helping-hands and hard-working clubs, as Sorosis is the parent of what may perhaps be entitled the "all-around" club.

Some of the children, it must be admitted, have outgrown their venerable parents in one line or another; but next to doing a good thing one's self is the pleasure of seeing it well done by one's children. No happier fate could befall the pioneers than to feel that they have been the inspirers, the seed-sowers for so fruitful and so various a crop of workers in the world's work.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CLUB FOR STUDY.

THE surest way of succeeding in anything is to make a hobby of it. The great reforms, the revolutions, the upturning of dynasties, have been the work of some one person who made a hobby of "this one thing," and in the words of the poet:

> Before the monstrous wrong he sat him down
> One man against a stone-walled city of sin.

It is probably true that if we could know all the facts in history, one hobby-rider would be found at the small starting-point of every great movement. All honor, then, to the men of one idea, who concentrate their wisdom and their effort on a single point; they are the ones who accomplish something.

In their smaller fields of action the clubs of one idea are no exception. Whether their hobby be a library for their town, some particular line of culture for themselves, some special form of charitable work, whatever shape their effort may take, they rarely fail to carry their point.

Many of these societies are for study, either to master a language or to become learned in history, philosophy, or poetry (I do not refer to such associations as "Brown-

ing Clubs," which are simply classes). The plan is usually well thought out, and perfectly adapted to the purpose desired. One of them has the study of countries reduced to a science, with a completeness of detail that must give the members real knowledge of that particular part of the world. One year, for example, they will take France. They divide the history of that country into fourteen epochs (since they have fourteen meetings in the season), and subdivide each epoch into topics, as history, government, noted characters, literature, art, architecture, and customs. The committee having the programme for the year in charge fix upon exactly fourteen topics for each day, there being fourteen members. This arrangement gives to each, one theme for every club meeting, on which she is expected to prepare herself thoroughly. A leader is also appointed for each of the fourteen meetings. Then the whole programme is printed and the members go to work, months beforehand, to study into the whole life-history of France. In their determination to do thorough work, they also decree that no papers shall be allowed, but members must repeat from memory what they have learned. Nothing could be better devised to make everyone work, to keep out drones and "shirks," and to thoroughly compass their end, namely, to become acquainted with France. This model of an organization for study is the Saturday Club of Columbus, Ohio. It has been in existence but few years, but it has proved even more beneficial than its founders dared to hope.

Another society in the West has taken up the study of philosophy, and beginning with the elder writers,

has come slowly down to our own time, examining and studying each one in detail as they proceeded. Formed solely of earnest students, this club too has had most satisfactory success.

The methods of the clubs for study and for special work differ greatly. Perhaps the larger number agree upon some one subject, as in the societies already mentioned, and all the members devote themselves to that. Several of them leave the selection of topics in the hands of a committee. The Indianapolis Woman's Club has a way of its own. Each member is requested to send to the Executive Committee notice of the line of study she wishes to pursue, and what part she desires to take; that is, whether to write a paper or to lead a conversation. When all the answers are in, the work is systematized and the year's programme prepared. The result is good, thoughtful papers on subjects sure to be of interest, and of variety enough to please all. The programme for the day is arranged thus: two papers are read on congenial topics, as "The Homeric Heroes: Achilles and Ulysses," by one writer, and "The Homeric Heroines: Helen and Penelope," by another, with a conversation led by a third member, on "The Relation between Homer's Men and Women," in which any member may take part.

One club in Chicago has been for years, in a most modest way, studying the history and customs of the peoples of the earth, by the original method of following the sun around the world.

A society in Quincy, Ill., with the suggestive name, "Friends in Council," takes one subject, as for example

The Drama, divides it into parts, the Greek, English, French, and German Drama, with eight representations for each division, and gives one day in turn to each, through the season of thirty-eight weeks. Each member selects her division, studies the books appropriate to it, and in her turn furnishes a paper upon it.

The greater number of the study clubs, however, devote themselves to general literature, some taking great writers one after another, with their works and their contemporaries, others dealing with literature in epochs. In treating the same subjects, also, each group of students has its individual way. One, the Monday Club, of Lafayette, Ind., arranges to have one paper, or sometimes two, on kindred topics, with a conversation appropriate to the subject guided by an appointed leader. The careful ordering of a day's entertainment will best be shown by giving one or two programmes from their dainty little book. On the day that we find a paper upon Keats, the conversation is on the "Eccentricities of Genius." On another occasion, following a paper on Thomas Moore, and a second on "The Emerald Isle in History," is a conversation on "The Irish Question."

Other Indiana clubs have just as carefully planned programmes. Indeed, I must say that a mental cyclone seems to have struck the State, such is the rage for intellectual culture, and so gigantic the tasks our "Hoosier" sisters lay out for themselves.

Most Woman's Clubs, as will be seen by a close study of them, work by substantially the same methods, but several, perhaps all of them, have evolved peculiar and individual features, which by way of suggestion to young

clubs it may be well to mention. One of the Indiana associations already spoken of—The Monday Club—has what it calls on the programme, "Impersonation," which, as explained by private letter, is this: A member selects some well-known, historical personage, tells his life-story, and, as far as possible, acts the character, leaving the club to guess the name. This has been found a very attractive programme, but it requires special gifts for its successful operation.

A society in Rochester, N. Y., keeps what they call an "Ignorance Book," a very bright idea, the hint for which was found in an old article in the *Atlantic Monthly*. In this book is written any question on which a member desires information, and after the paper of a meeting is disposed of, the book is opened and the queries read. If anyone present can answer a question it is settled then and there, if not it is given to some specialist in the club to look up and report upon at the next meeting. This has worked admirably, and proved stimulating as well as entertaining.

Another suggestion which has been carried out with great benefit, is to appoint a critic, whose business it is to point out defects in the papers, errors of construction or pronunciation—if any exist.

A new idea, also, is presented by another Western association, The Tourist Club of West Union, Ia., where each member responds to her name in the roll-call with a quotation, and if she is tardy, pays a fine. This latter is an excellent idea, for punctuality is a virtue that many of our dear sisters seem incapable of acquiring.

Training societies surely belong to the clubs for study.

The founders of nearly all Woman's Clubs remember and provide for the fact, that one of the important objects of these associations is to train woman in several ways: to express herself clearly with her pen; to speak impromptu; to take part in discussion; to work by parliamentary methods, and others. But some of our sisters feel their lack of special training so keenly that they give one point great prominence over all others.

For example, one club whose workings I know well, aims to train its members not only to prepare papers, but to preside easily, and to lead in discussion. This club has no officers except a secretary and treasurer (in one). Each member is obliged to take the president's chair in her alphabetical turn, to write a paper, and to lead the discussion in the same impartial order. She understands the conditions when she joins, and no shirking is tolerated.

Other clubs change all their officers every year, for the purpose of training the members in the several duties of the association; one even allows its officers to retain their positions only six months.

A club already mentioned, The Saturday Club, of Columbus, O., gives its members thorough drilling, not only in studying up a subject, but in arranging their thoughts clearly, and in speaking without notes.

Washington, D. C., gives us an interesting club called Pro Re Nata, whose almost sole end and aim is to train its members in the use of parliamentary methods, and extempore speaking. It began in a class for the study of parliamentary laws, and naturally crystallized into a club for the practice of what they had learned.

From this account of associations having one object, should not be omitted the Seidl Society, of Brooklyn, N. Y., which although perhaps not in the strict sense a club, is still a woman's organization with one definite purpose. It is one of the youngest of the sisterhood, being in its third year, but that it is among the most vigorous, its membership of nearly five hundred proves.

As its name indicates, the Seidl Society is musical, and its aim in starting was to furnish the city of Brooklyn, especially its women of small means, with the best music—in summer, by cheap admission to the series of afternoon and evening concerts at Brighton Beach (a neighboring sea-side resort), and in winter by the same facilities for enjoying concerts of high character in the city. It originated in the brain of one woman, Mrs. Laura C. Holloway-Langford, and it is to her untiring thought and effort that its success is due.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLUB PROPER.

By the club proper, I mean a society which has not organized for one special object, such as intellectual culture, study, reform or charitable work, but whose members aim to keep themselves broad enough to take interest in all of these fields of labor. They usually divide their members into committees, each of which works in a special line, and brings its results to the club. Thus the Philanthropic Committee may do as good work as any small club devoted to that purpose alone, and once or twice in the season presents papers and discussions in the club, useful and enlightening to those members who prefer to devote themselves to education, literature, or any other branch. Again, on its day, the Art Committee changes the mental atmosphere for the weary delver among the shadows of life, and shows another side of humanity, restful and broadening in its effect.

Certainly, for symmetrical growth and expansion on all sides, for the cure of narrowness of view, and conceit as to one's special importance, this sort of club is the most useful.

Different plans of running it are in favor. In some clubs every member is obliged to join a committee;

such are the Chicago Women's Club, and the Brooklyn Woman's Club, both large and flourishing associations. In others, on the contrary, no one is forced to belong to any committee, but is free to do as she likes.

In some clubs, the committees hold meetings of their own at private houses, between their days of representation, and have papers and discussions on their special subjects. One committee in the Brooklyn Woman's Club, has in this way made a careful study of music and the great masters, lasting two or three years, with interest and enthusiasm. Another committee of the same club—Literature—has lately begun a similar study in its particular line. When their day of representation comes in the club, such a committee is prepared to give something of real value to those who have been occupied with other interests. The Chicago Women's Club is a brilliant example of this method, I understand, each of its six or eight committees carrying on its own meetings, and its independent work, and only reporting results to the general club.

Again, others of these clubs have no committees on particular subjects, but one Programme Committee, which provides entertainment for the meetings. Such societies frequently depend upon outside speakers and readers, and the meetings assume the character of lectures, in which the members listen but do not take part. So far as I have been able to find out—and I have given much study to it—this plan destroys the vital interest of its members, and the club is apt to become cold and dead. Unless each one herself takes a part, or may take part in the exercises, she comes to re-

gard the club meetings with the indifference of a course of lectures. The whole body becomes paralyzed, as it were, though the members may not suspect the cause.

One very interesting club, in a college town in New England, combines these methods. The active membership is confined to thirty, all young women, and they hold a meeting every fortnight in the parlor of one of the members, where they read original papers and discuss them. On the alternate week, they hold a meeting in the lecture-room of some church, to which is admitted a large body of honorary members, two or three hundred. On these occasions a paper is read by an outsider, man or woman, professional lecturer or specialist on any subject, whom they can secure.

The honorary members pay very small dues, and have no privileges in the meetings of the active members. They are ladies of all ages, many of whom would not care to work in a club. This plan has worked admirably for several years, to the apparent satisfaction of all concerned.

For a large body, the broad club I have been trying to describe seems the most desirable, and the record of work accomplished by some of them would be astounding to those who have not studied the development of Woman's Clubs.

The programme of a club of this sort is arranged differently from others. As a rule, it has more variety. Some of them have music and recitations at the beginning and end of the literary exercises; preferably of talent within the club, though professionals are nearly always glad to help if invited.

CHAPTER X.

HOW TO START A CLUB.

NOTHING is easier than to start a club nowadays, when women are eager for intellectual stimulus and association. To found it wisely, however, requires thought, for it soon gets beyond the control of its founder, and it is much better to think the plan out thoroughly before opening the subject to others, who have it not so deeply at heart.

The course I recommend is this: First, decide what is wanted; whether a broad general club, one for special study, to help others, or for intellectual culture. Then consult one, possibly two (but no more), thoughtful women; together fix upon a plan of work, and a constitution, even a name if possible. Study the subject carefully, and decide exactly how it shall be conducted in every particular, and commit the whole plan to writing.

Then—and not till then—invite a few friends, perhaps a dozen, to your parlor. State your plans fully, without reading the constitution, and ask them, if they approve, to help organize the new club. Those who agree to do so will then nominate a chairman, and proceed to begin work. If any decline, they can do no less than leave.

At this meeting a constitution may be adopted, and

officers elected. Club work being usually unfamiliar to ladies, they will readily adopt the constitution prepared, and naturally elect the founder president. Understand me: I do not advise what is called "one woman power," but it is right that the one who plans and starts a club, having studied and worked it out, should decide what she prefers, and begin on those lines. Before the members have worked long enough to have definite ideas of club management, they will have tried her plan, and in general they will be satisfied. But if they are not, they will at least know what they do want, and then will be time to alter or amend.

This course prevents the long discussion of details between people not yet used to club needs, and the frequent settlement of questions in impractical or offensive ways.

It is to help in this preliminary study of ways and means, that I intend to prepare a chapter of "Hints," or "Suggestions," the result of several years of close connection with clubs, much of the time as member of the Board or Executive Committee, and it will be well for one thinking of forming a club, to study the different points carefully.

If the proposed club is to be small, and limited in membership, it will not be wise to set out with a variety of aims or tastes. It will be better to begin with members all heartily agreed upon one subject. For example: if two or three care most for intellectual culture, a half-dozen prefer to work in philanthropic ways, a few are enthusiasts in elevating their neighbors by classes, while the remainder long for hard study, a small club

will either spread its efforts over so much ground that nothing of value will be accomplished, or only a few of the members will be satisfied.

On the contrary, if all enter with interest any one line of work, results will follow the smallest club. As members increase, interests can easily be added, and standing committees be formed.

By confining a society to one subject, I mean not that one subject alone shall be presented, as Art, Science, or Literature ; but that the club shall not divide its small membership into weak committees, and try to work independently in several ways. A way that has been often carried out in small clubs, and I believe with entire satisfaction, is to let a member, either strictly in her turn, or by volunteering, or by any manner of selecting agreed upon, prepare a paper on the subject she knows best, which the club may discuss and ask questions about. In that way the general intelligence of the society is raised, and the best is brought out of every member.

It is desirable, when this plan is adopted, to announce the subject at a previous meeting, so that members may prepare themselves to listen and to discuss intelligently. If any outside work is attempted, it should be something in which everyone is interested.

A club of this sort should have a President, Vice-President (to take her place in absence), a Secretary—one is enough in a small club—and a Treasurer. Sometimes one person can do the work of both secretary and treasurer. It is very desirable to begin a careful record of meetings and of business done, from the very first,

CHAPTER XI.

SUGGESTIONS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF WOMAN'S CLUBS.

Importance of Order.—Persons who have not worked in a club are apt to underrate the importance of conducting a meeting strictly according to the formal method, or by parliamentary rules.

"We're just a party of ladies," I once heard a club member say, on a particularly serious occasion; "why can't we talk it over like ladies, and settle it?" Old club members could answer her at once. There are several reasons why the prescribed method is necessary. First: it gives every woman who has anything to say on the subject under discussion a chance to be heard. Secondly: the little formality of rising is a check upon hasty or unpleasant remarks, one is more apt to weigh her words. She might easily say to her next neighbor what she would by no means speak out to a room full. Thirdly: it is in another way a check upon the hasty temper, and the uncontrolled tongue prone to fall into personalities; a call to order by the president or another member, brings a speaker to her senses very quickly. Fourthly: without the formality of each member rising, and being recognized as having the floor, it would often be impossible to carry on business;

two or three would talk at once, and the meeting would soon degenerate into a buzz of conversation, each one expressing her opinions to her neighbor only. If any doubter will try to settle a question by "talking it over" informally with a dozen persons—men or women—who are vitally interested in the subject, he will soon be convinced.

Obeying Rules.—Nothing is more childish, and one may almost say, alas! that nothing is more common, in societies of all kinds, than to make rules to correct some evil, and then persistently break them. There are several reasons to be given for this. A member may not approve of the regulation, and so consider that she is not bound by it, or she may be careless and forget, or, finding its provisions somewhat annoying, she may brush it aside as an unimportant thing. But it is not unimportant; the rule, to be sure, may be ill-considered or trivial, but the effect on herself, and the character she is helping to give the society, is far from trivial. One of the great uses of the Woman's Club is to train women to work in organized ways; to make regulations and abide by them, at whatever cost; to yield to the will of the majority, even against her judgment; and to do her best to make her club an orderly, well-regulated association. How will a society ever learn the folly of hasty legislation, unless, by carrying out its provisions, the inconveniences and annoyances come home to them? Does any club wish to go on forever like a party of children in the nursery, *playing* at organized work? The quickest way to dispose of an ill-

considered or impractical regulation, is to carry it out to the letter, and so prove its faults. To ignore it and make it a dead letter, is to encourage hasty and careless work.

Conducting Business.—It would sound absurd to say that the way to do business is in a business-like way. Yet one who looks on at the manner of conducting affairs, even of great moment, in associations of all sorts (for, in this regárd, our brothers are as much in fault as we), knows that many people have yet to learn that apparent truism. What can be more unbusiness-like than the way in which conventions act! Did anyone ever hear a speaker *answer* his predecessor, whom he rose to reply to? on the contrary, does he not in nine times out of ten wander off from the points made, air his views upon some other phase of the subject, of greater interest to him, and so confuse and thrust into the background the remarks of his opponent, that the hearers—who are to settle it by vote, remember—forget the argument and are tolerably sure to vote blindly with the last speaker? This we have seen all our lives in meetings conducted by men, and to reform this method, in a word, to do business in a business-like way, is a good mark for a Woman's Club to aim at.

To this end several things are necessary, that every woman should require of herself. First, never to vote without really considering the subject; secondly, to listen to the argument and not carry on a chat with her neighbor till the vote is called for. Every chairman of a committee, and presiding officer, can testify to the

annoyance caused by certain irrepressible whisperers, who hear nothing proposed, prevent their neighbor from hearing, and when a vote is called for, calmly ask what the question is, thus taking the time of a whole society, to repeat to one what has been already said in her presence. To speak plainly, this is not only ill-bred, but exceedingly selfish, and a club member who cannot control her tongue in a business meeting would confer a benefit on the association by resigning her place on the committee, if not in the club. Thirdly, never to rise to speak unless she has something to say *to the point*, and to sit down the moment she has said it. Business would be done in half the time it now takes, if people knew enough to stop when they have finished. Coming to an end seems to be the greatest difficulty with impromptu speakers. I have known talkers who invariably "said their say" twice or thrice before they stopped, and no matter how bright the remarks they had to make, everyone dreaded to see them rise. The golden rule for an impromptu speaker is: know what you want to say, say it once, as tersely and pointedly as possible, then instantly sit down. A rambling, wandering, tiresome talker, who should adopt this rule, would be surprised at the effectiveness of his speech.

Time for Business.—It is a question, in clubs that admit guests, when the business shall be transacted, for no society wishes to bring its private affairs before strangers. Several plans are in use by different clubs. One organization that is large, and has a great deal of

business, alternates its literary and social meetings, all through the season, with one exclusively for business, where of course no guests are admitted. Another club about the same size, but not having so much business, holds four meetings during the year, besides its regular meetings, entirely for this purpose, called Quarterlies. This occasion is given a delightful and festive character, by having a social hour and a luncheon before business begins. Still another way is to call members to business meeting an hour before the regular time of assembling, and admit no guests till that is adjourned. This is in some cases inconvenient, unless the club meets in a hotel, or has a suite of rooms where friends may wait.

Selection of Officers.—The choice of its officers is one of the most important acts of a club. It would seem unnecessary to say, that the one reason for placing a person in official position is, that she is able to perform its duties with credit to herself and the club. Yet truly, that consideration seems to have less weight than any other in the selection of officers, from the president of the United States, down to the chairman of a club committee. The motives of our brothers in nominating the officers that shall rule over us, we will not discuss, but it will be wholesome for us, club members, to look a little into our own motives. Do we consent to the nomination of A for an office because she wants it, or because B, who is altogether more fit, declined to run against her? or because she is a personal friend? or because she feels hurt about being left out last year? Do we ever put women into office for no more potent

reasons than these? Shall we ever be well or wisely officered, so long as we pursue this childish policy?

Rotation in Office.—This is a vexed subject, that has been discussed in clubs since clubs began, and is no nearer settlement now than it has been from the first. People will always differ on the point, and the only way of peace is to decide it in the formation of the club. There are arguments for both sides, and clubs differ so widely in usage, that some of them retain an officer for life, while others change them every six months. The arguments in favor of long service are that the details of the work are thoroughly mastered, and better results are produced; also, that a long-term officer gets an enthusiasm, and a certain mental alertness which is a great advantage to the club.

On the other hand, a prolonged term under one rule is apt to land the club in a rut, for few persons are broad enough to keep interest bright on all sides. Again, an old officer is prone to become somewhat tyrannical, to think the club belongs to her, while at the same time her long occupancy deprives other members of the training they would get in the position. Lastly, if a society is unfortunate enough to elect an uninspiring president, it need not suffer long. The point should be definitely settled very early in a club's life, and incorporated in the constitution, for to tender-hearted club women it is a delicate matter to dispose of an officer, even when she is exceedingly unfit, and a drag upon the association. A fixed time-limit in a constitution is a needed safeguard.

I have studied clubs very closely for years, and in my judgment, wisdom, as usual, lies between the extremes. The indefinitely long term often becomes an embarrassment, and a great hinderance to the growth of a society, while the too short one keeps a club constantly under crude, untrained government. Two clubs that I know, seem to have settled the question about right. They elect all officers every year, and allow but two re-elections, or three years of service, from each one. It is often said that it takes a novice one year to learn what the duties are, another to acquire ease in doing them, and a third to show what she can do when she has mastered her difficulties. Three years does appear only long enough to fully develop an officer.

The Board of Directors.—Whether the governing body is called a Board of Directors, Board of Managers, or Executive Committee, it is the most important part of the working force of a club, and its powers and duties should be clearly defined. To begin with its size: the smaller the number of faithful, prompt members, the more easily it will work; a committee of five is better than one of nine, and anything larger is clumsy and bulky in the extreme. It is not wise to have it composed of the club officers alone, for two reasons. First, every active officer in a club that has life, has enough to do to fill her own place well. Secondly, it may be necessary sometimes to deal officially with an officer, and therefore to have a power above all other officers. The higher officers are usually *ex-officio* members of the Board, and the Executive body, into whose hands the

club has given its most sacred interests, should be the last and highest authority on every question. They are in law the Trustees of the Society, they are responsible for its deeds; they should therefore have power commensurate with the seriousness of their office.

There is another point; the power with which that body is endowed, will generally be found to be a measure of the actual work a club will accomplish. In other words, a conscientious, earnest body of five members will do much more and much better work than can be done by forty or a hundred, for these simple reasons: First, they can almost certainly agree on a line of policy, and carry it out heartily; and, secondly, being so few, with the sharp eyes of the club upon them, they feel their responsibility, and are more cautious and thoughtful than they would be if they were but five of one hundred. Measures agreed upon by one hundred persons must always be a compromise, for it is impossible that anything should exactly please everybody. There never was a policy proposed that something could not be said on the other side, and the one to say it, and to divide the club and confuse its action, will always be on hand.

In studying the work of the clubs whose record I have been able to get, I have found that those which have done grand work, really produced results that we are all proud of, have invariably been governed by a small Executive Board, with great power. In some cases—as in the Chicago Women's Club—this body, with the exception of electing its officers, does the entire business of the association, including the admission

of members, and only reports to the club at its annual meeting. Few societies of women have so noble a record of work as that one. On the other hand, large, flourishing, wide-awake clubs, which require detailed and frequent reports from the Board, with the privilege of undoing its work if they choose, have nothing to show for years of existence. These are plain facts, and no theory of mine. If a Board has no absolute power it feels no responsibility. Why should they spend time and thought to decide a question wisely, when it will be all gone over and settled, without half the thought they have given to it, by the club?

Moreover, in a large club, of which the individual members cannot possibly feel the responsibility that five alone must feel, how is a business matter treated? Important affairs, which should be wisely considered, are discussed and re-discussed, irresponsible members air their private theories, flippant ones get the club to laughing, impatient ones hurry it over, and when the club is tired, the whole thing is settled in a minute; if wisely, it is by accident.

Nor is the plan I advocate unfair to the rest of the club, as some club women contend. If the time of service is limited, every member of the society may have opportunity to work on that committee, and enjoy the power as well as share the responsibility of the position.

Again, the selection of members of this Board is more important than of any other officers. They should never be very young, nor should they be new members; neither should they all be changed at once. Work

would drag, and blunders occur, if there were no old members, knowing the routine, to initiate the fresh ones. One club, whose working I am familiar with, has arranged that wisely. It has nine members, divided into three sets of three each. Every year three are elected to serve three years, and three who have served their term go out, so that all the time there are members in their third year of service, and others in their second year, to instruct the new ones. That has worked successfully.

A most important matter in the working of an Executive Board is the confidential nature of its action. In the one duty of passing upon candidates for membership, the Board must have power to act freely and without fear of publicity, or it cannot exercise the supervision over its admissions that is its duty to exercise. If the Board is not able to protect the club from undesirable members, who shall do so? and if no one, why not open the doors to the whole world at once. Unless the action of the Board can be made entirely confidential, no member will be willing to tell what she may know that makes a proposed candidate undesirable. If she does, she will be very likely to get into trouble, even though it is in the conscientious discharge of her duty. The report will get out, the friends of the candidate will turn to enemies, and she will be branded with the name of scandal-monger at the very least. I have known this to happen, and bring great distress upon a member who had done violence to her own feelings in order to shield the club from an unworthy member.

Conducting Elections.—The selection of club officers is an important matter, and should never be done by nominations from the floor. For one reason, because thoughtless members, to "get the thing over," or to please a friend, will be more likely to nominate, than a wiser member who wants to consider. Once named and seconded, the person is a candidate for the office, although all the club but two may see her unfitness; and as women are tender-hearted about voting against a fellow-member who sits with them, she is quite likely to get the position. This is deplorable; and so long as we are over-sensitive about the feelings of a member, a plan should be devised by which cooler counsels will govern. One way in use, is for the President to appoint a Nominating Committee of two or three, who shall themselves make out the list of candidates. Disaffected persons are of course at liberty to get up an opposing list, and every member may vote for whoever she chooses, and this way, which men have adopted in their clubs, seems to me the wisest yet tried. Since the mass are indifferent, and will vote almost mechanically, the committee's list will generally be elected.

Another way, which is intended to get at the wish of the club, is this: Some time before election, a Nominating Committee is appointed by the President. This committee sends to each member a blank, with the name of every office printed, and a place opposite each for her to write the name of her choice for that office. From these blanks, when returned, the committee makes out a ticket containing, if possible, two names for every office, the name having most

votes being placed first, that with the next number placed opposite. Having thus obtained as nearly as possible the voice of the club, on election morning the printed ticket, with its double row of names, is presented to every member present. In one club which thus makes up its ticket, voting is done by taking every office in turn, voting with a ballot-box and written ballots. This is a tremendous piece of work when a club has over twenty officers to elect, and in case of a tie, has to repeat a vote. It sometimes occupies six hours.

Another club, making up its ticket in exactly the same way, presents the printed double list to its members on election day, and each one proceeds to indicate by her pencil which of the two names she prefers for each office, scratching the one she does not want. Or, she may even write a new name if she likes. When this is done, the folded tickets are collected and given to two tellers (appointed by the President), who take their tickets into another room—a committee-room—to count, and while they are at work, the regular annual business of the club goes on. When the tellers are ready to report, business is suspended and the list of elected officers read. This way gives just as much liberty of choice as the former, and detains the club but a few minutes. It has proved perfectly satisfactory.

The Admission of Members.—Great care should be exercised, now that the Woman's Club is becoming popular, and women of all kinds are clamoring to join, that none but the worthy, and those that will work harmoniously, get in. In our large cities especially, women

who wish to advertise something, and adventurers of all sorts who think they can use the club, make effort to join. The door should be carefully and jealously guarded. Most large city clubs, I think, require two or three vouchers for a candidate, yet, in spite of this fact, undesirable and troublesome persons manage to be admitted. It is done by the "good-nature" of women. Now, good-nature (so-called) is decidedly out of place in a doorkeeper, and the Executive Committee should insist that a voucher shall absolutely *know* her candidate. As it is in most clubs, if A wants to get in a friend, who knows no one else in the club, she will ask B and C to vouch for her. They may never have seen the woman, but they take A's word that she is all right; the name goes before the committee with the three names. The committee does not, and cannot, know all candidates, it is obliged to take them on the vouching. So the name goes to the club, and the candidate is elected (generally) by the aid of two members who do not know her. This is, of course, equivalent to admitting any woman who can get one member to propose her name, and leaves the club at the mercy of its weakest or most designing member. The serious responsibility of a voucher should be most strongly insisted upon. One should no more be admitted by help of a voucher who does not know her, than by the vote of outsiders.

Individual Responsibility.—One often hears a remark like this: "I did not think the club would do so and so," the speaker evidently not realizing that she was just as much "the club" as any other one. Few club mem-

bers seem to appreciate their individual responsibility in every club act. If a course of action is decided upon which a member thinks unwise or not desirable, and she does not put in her protest at the proper time, she fails in her plain duty. A member should never say "the club" did so, but "we" did so. She can neither escape her responsibility for action taken, by refusing to vote, nor by decrying the result when accomplished.

Guests.—The question of allowing guests at the club meetings is an interesting one. The clubs of New York and its vicinity are the only ones, I believe, which admit guests freely, their own townspeople as well as strangers. There is much to be said in favor of the custom, worthy the consideration of new societies. First, and most important, it makes of the club a great educator of women, and thus spreads the club-idea abroad. Almost every woman that visits a club is delighted, and at once fired with a desire to belong to one, or to start one, if none exist in her town. This is the most valuable work a club can do in this age. Secondly, it provides a delightful way to entertain. There is nothing more acceptable to a friend—so far as I have observed—than an invitation to one's club, especially if that club provides a social hour to make acquaintances.

Against the custom, I can learn of but one objection; it seems to give to its fellow-citizens the benefits and pleasures of the club, without cost, and without their assuming any responsibility. It appears to me that this is a mistaken inference, for this reason: When a woman goes to a club and is pleased, she at once wants to join.

The most liberal entertainers find that a woman is rarely willing to come very frequently as a guest; she wants her name proposed for membership.

Refreshments.—"It is an eating club," we sometimes hear, in tone that implies that eating with one's friends is a reprehensible practice. Let us look at it a bit. It is well known in society that something of the nature of refreshments is indispensable to a really social time—*not* for the sake of supplying one's physical needs, but entirely for the mental stimulus, for the "stirring up" that results. The stiffest church sociable melts and grows genial over a cup of tea, and a cup of coffee from the hand of a friend, during a call, opens the heart surprisingly. Whatever the reason, or however it may work, this is a fact—that eating together warms the heart and loosens the tongue. A club that habitually takes luncheon or tea at its meetings is always a more social, friendly, and homogeneous club—I maintain—than one which does not. The hour over the lunch-table makes members better acquainted, gives opportunity to form new friendships, and is in every respect a delightful addition to a club meeting.

For example (to be very personal), I belong to two clubs of about the same size—between one and two hundred. In one we invariably take luncheon, in the other we do not. In the one society I know twice as many members as I do in the other, though I have not belonged to it so long, and I know them as old friends. We have lingered together over the lunch-table, exchanged opinions freely, and in fact have had opportunity to be-

bers seem to appreciate their individual responsibility in every club act. If a course of action is decided upon which a member thinks unwise or not desirable, and she does not put in her protest at the proper time, she fails in her plain duty. A member should never say "the club" did so, but "we" did so. She can neither escape her responsibility for action taken, by refusing to vote, nor by decrying the result when accomplished.

Guests.—The question of allowing guests at the club meetings is an interesting one. The clubs of New York and its vicinity are the only ones, I believe, which admit guests freely, their own townspeople as well as strangers. There is much to be said in favor of the custom, worthy the consideration of new societies. First, and most important, it makes of the club a great educator of women, and thus spreads the club-idea abroad. Almost every woman that visits a club is delighted, and at once fired with a desire to belong to one, or to start one, if none exist in her town. This is the most valuable work a club can do in this age. Secondly, it provides a delightful way to entertain. There is nothing more acceptable to a friend—so far as I have observed—than an invitation to one's club, especially if that club provides a social hour to make acquaintances.

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come well acquainted. In the non-lunching club I have a good many bowing acquaintances. I can call by name the larger part of them, but excepting the officers with whom I have worked, I scarcely know them at all. There is no chance to get acquainted. They come after lunch, they hurry home to dinner.

In New York, too, there are other reasons that make a regular lunch desirable. Most of the members come from a distance, and would have to eat somewhere away from home; and again, by luncheon at a hotel or restaurant the club gets the use of parlors it could not command in any other way. Some clubs have a five-o'clock tea after the meeting. That is pleasant, but would be impractical in New York, because of the difficulty of getting home after business men begin to fill up the trains.

It is very pleasant for a club to have simple refreshments, served in a simple way, and for the purpose it is desirable to own its own china. One club that I have heard of, supplied itself with a harlequin set of cups and saucers by every member contributing one, and another club in the same way secured a set of beautiful plates.

Bulletin Board.—A trouble that all city clubs suffer from, is the request that notices shall be read. This becomes after a while very annoying, and encroaches sadly upon the club hour. The problem of how to save its time and not hurt the feelings of members with this or that axe to grind, has been solved in at least one club, by setting up a bulletin board on which are fastened the notices, where all can read as they enter the room.

The board is of regular make, and dainty size (perhaps 14 by 24 inches), covered with green cloth, and hangs beside the door of the club room.

Custodians.—A custodian, or two if the club is large, assist greatly in making things run smoothly. Their duties are, to be near the door of the room, to receive guests and to seat them, to see that the president's table is provided with water and glasses, that the heat is turned off or on, and windows opened or closed as necessary. In fact, there are so many little services they can perform that it would be hard to enumerate them.

The Roll.—Another thing that takes time, yet for some reasons is desirable, is the roll-call. It is pleasant to hear the names, and to know who is present, and it is desirable that the secretary should have a list of members attending. On the other hand, it seems something like a school performance, and when the names number nearly two hundred, it takes a long time. The plan adopted in one club to secure the list, yet save the time, is to have large cards (18 by 24 inches perhaps) with all the names printed alphabetically, and in coarse print, so as to be readily found. One of these cards is hung beside the door, with a pencil attached, and every member is requested, and reminded by the custodian at the door, to mark her name when she comes in. After adjournment, the secretary takes the card home with her, and makes her record at leisure. In one Western club, the monotonous roll-call is responded to, not by

a bare "Present," but by a quotation, which must be a pleasing variation upon the common way, and is practical in a club of not more than thirty or forty members.

Esprit de Corps.—Most club members, so far as my experience goes, are loyal to their association, and help to sustain its good reputation abroad, but now and then one will be found who, being witty and bright in talk, cannot resist entertaining her friends by caricature and ridicule of what goes on behind doors closed to the public. It is generally thoughtless and not unkindly, and is intended to be harmless. But it is far from harmless; it is unfriendly to the members, and injures the club name. Woman's Societies have not entirely outlived the stage of newspaper ridicule, they are still a favorite butt for reportorial smartness. Every member of a club should guard her tongue with care, and hold the transactions within its doors as a sacred trust, remembering that it is largely a training-school, that human nature is prone to blunder, and above all, that every time she ridicules or makes fun of the club, or any of its members, she helps to lower it in the minds of her hearers. The good things she tells will be forgotten, while the absurd or the foolish will spread and grow, till they give the club a character before the public. No one thing can do so much to injure the reputation of a Woman's Association as a thoughtless, sharp-tongued member, who likes to "show it up" to her friends.

Reporters.—So soon as a club is talked about or known, within the reach of newspaperdom, it must

meet and settle the question of being reported. Keen young reporters, with reputation to make, and bread to earn, will besiege its doors, and waylay its members for an item. These are often young women, and they will manage to slip in as guests, or beguile inquirers with a friendly tongue. But their "items" are dressed up to suit the demands of the press, and the result is too often a would-be-funny "smartness" that is offensive, not to say insulting. On the other hand, if they are rigidly excluded from a club, disappointed hopes (of a dollar or two) will generally sharpen the pen to more flagrant breaches of courtesy. This is a disagreeable state of things, but it may as well be recognized and met. We are in a measure in the hands of the newspaper, and must deal wisely with an engine that has such power to wound.

Some clubs entrench themselves within safe walls and behind closed doors, refuse admission to the whole newspaper fraternity, decline to furnish the smallest item, and even make it a misdemeanor in a member to introduce a guest who shall afterward, in any way, print a word concerning it. The result of this policy is easily foreseen. The reporter who has given time to seek out the habitat and the convening hour of the club, disappointed of his facts, and keenly alive to his loss of time —consequently money—proceeds naturally to reimburse himself by drawing on his imagination for facts. A club which thus guarded its councils from the public, was on one occasion entertained the next morning by seeing, in a large daily paper, half a column of pretended reports of its deliberations, with the names of its

best-known members, and hideous cuts presented as their portraits. Of course the whole thing was made up, and the pictures were attempted likenesses of other unfortunates, probably once used in advertisements. But the outside world did not know that fact, and it doubtless accepted every statement as true.

The manner in which that club has suffered at the hands of reporters, long ago convinced me that it is a short-sighted policy, and that a much wiser way may be found. We cannot muzzle the press, the best we can do is to conciliate it—or so it seems to me.

The reporter, "boggy" as he may be to a notoriety-hating association, will usually be found to be a young person of pleasing manners, and quite susceptible to kindness. A little information, cheerfully given, on which to base the desired item, will placate him, a refined bearing with natural womanly reserve will impress him, and draw the venom out of his pen. A little knowledge of the subject in hand and trend of the discussion, will reduce the amount of personality necessary to fill his space, and often seem to deaden his appetite for names and descriptions of toilets. In a word, if a reporter is managed with tact and wisdom, he may be rendered comparatively harmless.

It is often a good way to make a bright young woman, already in the employment of a newspaper, a member of the club, and try to inspire her with an *esprit de corps* that shall dominate her reports. Even then, however, papers to which she does not contribute will send out their news-hunters, and they must be met. It would be a good plan, in a city club, to appoint some tactful, care-

ful woman to the office of "interviewer," and delegate to her the duty of supplying information.

Club Entertainments.—Occasional entertainments, to which the outside world may be invited, at least once a year, seem to be a desirable attachment to club duties at the present day, partly for its social effect on the members, but more for its educating effect on society at large. It helps greatly to spread the knowledge of the life and work of the Woman's Club, to eradicate prejudices, to win friends. Hence it is useful.

The form the entertainment shall take is governed entirely by the tastes of its members. One popular way, where guests are gentlemen as well as ladies, is an evening dinner, served, of course, by a caterer, and followed by music, recitations, and short speeches, both from guests and members. The way to manage the expense, so that it shall not draw too heavily on the club treasury, is to put the tickets at a price that will cover not only the caterer's charge per plate, but the flowers, the souvenirs—if any—and extras, like service in the cloak-rooms, man to open carriages, etc. From two to three dollars will do this in good style (without wine) in large cities, and it would of course be less in smaller ones. Each member decides how many guests she will bring, and pays for the tickets for herself and them. The Executive Committee then selects as many as the club desires, from the best-known and most intelligent citizens of the town, invites them as club guests, and pays for them out of the club treasury.

A similar entertainment is often given in the form of

a luncheon at noon, when the same sort of a programme is carried out, with the guests all ladies. These are very delightful affairs. Again, a club may choose to have an evening reception for gentlemen and ladies, purely social, like a private reception, or with some entertainment. There may be one bright paper, and some choice music, or a journal made up of contributions of varied sorts from the most gifted members, and of course refreshments. On the occasion of its twenty-first birthday one club hired a large room, covered its bare floor with rugs (lent by the members), decorated it with tapestries and plants, and furnished it with quaint chairs and antique sofas. Having transformed the place into an elegant reception-room, they ordered a beautiful supper of their caterer, and invited a large number of their townspeople as their guests. It was a brilliantly successful affair.

Some clubs entertain their friends with a play, others with well-selected recitations and music only. An annual show of hospitality of some kind should be provided for, because so long as Woman's Clubs are looked upon in any way askance, it is well to remind the world that even club women are ladies, and that being able to read a paper or make a speech, does not prevent their remaining charming hostesses and admirable entertainers; also that the club is nothing of which they are ashamed, or which they wish to hide under a bushel.

The Club-house.—So long as a club has less than fifty members, it can easily meet in private parlors, and feel

no need of quarters of its own. But soon after it passes that mark it becomes unwieldy for a residence, and begins to experience the longing of all larger clubs, for a permanent home. Meeting in a hall is usually a dreary affair, with none of the home-feeling so desired in every woman's organization. Occupying the parlors of a first-class restaurant or hotel is a shade better. But nothing gives the freedom and comfort of rooms that belong to the society, whether they be in a hired house, or a building of which they own every inch. Many clubs rent rooms which they furnish and use, some hire a whole house and sublet the rooms they can spare, while a brave few have built houses for themselves.

The example of building was set, I believe, by the Wisconsin Woman's Club, of Milwaukee, which organized within its own body a stock company, raised money, and put up a beautiful club-house. The building supplied a need in the city, a small audience-room with ante-rooms, etc., and the rent of it soon placed the association in an independent position. Other clubs have done likewise, some with the help of a timely legacy, or a gift from a wealthy friend. It is a thing not difficult to do, away from the large cities where the cost is so great. And a club that is well housed, under its own roof, is much to be envied.

If, however, a society cannot do this, it can be quite comfortable in a convenient suite of rooms that are hired, especially if some of them are kept open for the use of members, supplied with newspapers and magazines, a place to lie down and change the dress. Clubs in our large cities which cannot afford even the luxury of

rooms for their exclusive use, never enjoy the delightful home feeling attached to quarters of their own.

Year-Book.—Besides the constitution and list of members, which should always be printed for the use of the club, it is a pleasant custom to print a Year-Book, containing the work of the year, a brief account of its entertainments, and a programme of each day, with perhaps a little original poetry, or a short paper or two that have been given to the club during the year. It is very nice for members to keep, to look over in later years, and it is convenient to exchange with other clubs.

Sensitiveness.—Undue sensitiveness to opposition of any kind, is something for every club woman to divest herself of as quickly as possible. Nothing is more narrowing, or more hampering to a club's free action, than this relic of the old "secluded lives" we are trying to get out of. We have all—I'm sorry to say—seen a candidate for an office hastily withdraw her name, and refuse to be voted for, because she saw that she should not be unanimously elected. "If my friends want someone else more than they do me," I have heard one say, "I wouldn't have the office on any terms."

The mistake here is easy to point out. Her defeat—if she be defeated—will be, *not because her friends want someone else more than they do her*, but because the opposing candidate happens to have *more* friends in the society. The friends of the former are perfectly loyal, and place their candidate first, but the friends of the

latter happen to outnumber them. Now, no one can expect to be the favorite of everybody, hence how foolish to be "hurt" at discovering that fact! Again, a person may cherish another in her heart of hearts, yet not regard her as fitted for a particular office. It is—or should be—no test of friendship to vote for or against a person.

Another thing: in the discussion of a question, a member is often of necessity on the opposite side from her friend. In private conversation they can argue and disagree with perfect good-will and friendliness—why not then on the floor, in public discussion? Yet we often see a person hesitate to express herself, or apologize, because her view is different from that of her friend; and worse, we sometimes see the friend "hurt" by such opposition. This is unworthy of club women; it is a "survival" from the nursery days of our sex; let us conquer it.

CHAPTER XII.

A PRACTICAL CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

The name of this Association shall be the Saturday Morning Club.

[In the early days of Woman's Clubs, it was desirable to embody the fact of its being a woman's association in the name, but since the name of State or town must be added to distinguish it from a thousand other woman's societies, it is a clumsy and somewhat unwieldy title. Now that Woman's Clubs have proved their right and intention to exist, and are as firmly established as those of men, it seems desirable to drop the distinction of sex, and select a name like The Fortnightly, or The Lotus, or any on which the members shall agree.]

ARTICLE II.

OBJECT.

The object of this Association is to stimulate intellectual and moral development, to promote good fellowship among its members, and to strengthen their individual efforts for humanity by efficient organization.

[If the club is to be exclusively for intellectual culture the above paragraph should end with its first clause; if

it adds to this object a social element—which is of great value—the second clause defines it; and if there be any outside interest whatever, philanthropic, educational, or reformatory, it is expressed by the closing phrase.]

ARTICLE III.

Officers.

Sec. 1. The officers of this Association shall be a President, Vice-President, Recording and Corresponding Secretaries, Treasurer, and a Board of six Directors.

Sec. 2. No person shall be eligible for office until she has been a member at least one year.

Sec. 3. No member shall hold more than one office at a time, and three consecutive terms shall be the limit of any officer's service, though after a year's interval she shall be again eligible.

Sec. 4. Any office becoming vacant during the year shall be filled till the next regular election, by appointment of the Board of Directors.

Sec. 5. The duties of the President, Vice-President, the two Secretaries, and the Treasurer, shall be such as belong to their several offices in all societies.

Sec. 6. All officers shall report at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE IV.

The Board of Directors.

Sec. 1. The Board of Directors shall transact the business of the Club, keep general oversight of its interests, and have access to its books at all times.

SEC. 2. The Board may remove any name from the roll of membership, when in their judgment the best interest of the Club demands it, on the written request of two-thirds of its members, and it may remit the dues of a member at its discretion.

SEC. 3. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman of the Board at any time, and *shall* be called upon the written request of ten members of the Club.

SEC. 4. The proceedings of the Board, especially in the admission or rejection of candidates for membership, shall be entirely confidential, and any member violating this regulation shall be publicly expelled from the Board, as unworthy the confidence of the Club.

[In reference to the power placed in the hands of the Board of Directors, I have already expressed my opinion, in Chap. XI. In regard to Sec. 2, I consider it important that the club should have some way to relieve itself of a troublesome member, after all kind and sisterly efforts at reforming her have failed. The Executive Board, in whose hands the club has placed its honor and good name, will, I am sure, in every case use the utmost discretion, and as little publicity as possible, in the discharge of this very unpleasant duty. The provision in Sec. 3, making it obligatory on the Chairman of the Board to call a special meeting on the formal demand of ten members of the club, will rarely be needed, but it is wise to be prepared for the most extreme cases.

The absolute secrecy which should be preserved in the Board as to its action, cannot be too strongly insisted upon. It is the only way to make sure of

honest, trustworthy work, and the penalty attached in Sec. 4, to its betrayal, is not too severe to seal the lips of the thoughtless or the mischievous.]

ARTICLE V.

Committees.

Sec. 1. There shall be six Standing Committees, on Literature, Art, Science, Education, The Home, and Philanthropy, one of which every member shall be required to join on entering the Club.

Sec. 2. Each Committee, in regular rotation, shall furnish the programme for a meeting of the Club, to consist of at least one original paper bearing upon the subject the Committee represents, furnished by some member of the Club.

Sec. 3. The Chairman of each Committee shall have ready the name of the paper and its author, for the President to announce at the meeting preceding that at which it is to be presented.

Sec. 4. The Chairman of each Committee shall report on the year's work at the Annual Meeting.

[The division of a club into committees has proved to be the best way of insuring a variety of topics for treatment. It may at first seem cumbersome in a club of twenty or thirty, but as the association grows, it is indispensable to good work. Requiring each member to enroll herself upon some committee, gives her at once a place and standing in the society which, in a large club, she might otherwise be months in reaching.

Moreover, it gives her greater interest in the work, and tends to bring to the front the talent of the society. I have already expressed my opinion—in Chap. XL—regarding the importance of having papers prepared by the club members. The usefulness of Sec. 3 is patent to all.]

ARTICLE VI.

Membership.

Sec. 1. Every member, after one year's connection with the Club, may propose each year one name for membership.

Sec. 2. The name and address of the candidate, with her qualifications for membership, must be presented to the Board in writing, with the names of two members besides the proposer, as vouchers.

Sec. 3. The name shall be received and acted upon at the next Board Meeting, and if accepted, shall be announced to the Club, by sending to each member a printed slip, bearing the full name and address of the candidate, with the names of proposer and vouchers.

Sec. 4. If any member of the Club knows good reason why the proposed candidate should not be admitted to membership, it shall be her duty, under the seal of confidence, to acquaint the Board with the facts, when the Board, after due examination, shall take such measures as it considers best for the withdrawal of the name.

Sec. 5. If no valid objection is made, the name shall be offered to the Club at the following Quarterly

Meeting, for balloting. Five black balls shall exclude.

SEC. 6. If defeated, the name shall not be presented again to the Board within one year.

SEC. 7. If the newly-elected member, having received a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws, does not complete her membership, by payment of dues, and subscribing to the conditions of the Constitution within three months, her name shall be dropped, and she shall not be again eligible for membership for one year.

[Limiting the right of members to proposing but one name in each year, seems to me very desirable to keep the club membership broad. If it is not done, a member with a large circle of friends can bring into the society so many of her own kind as to give it a decided bias. The usefulness of the provision in Sec. 3, for sending the name and address of a candidate to every member, must be apparent. When it is done, and the matter thus brought to the notice of each individual in the club, there can be no shirking of responsibility, the non-attendants will be as well informed as the attendants, and failure to notify the Board of a candidate's unworthiness becomes equivalent to an endorsement of her, and should be so regarded. The plan of voting for new members at Quarterly or Business meetings only, is excellent. It insures that no stranger shall be present, and it does not take time that should be given to the programme of the afternoon. Sec. 7 is to protect the club against indifferent

and careless persons, who, strange to say, are sometimes almost thrust into a club by their friends.]

ARTICLE VII.

Dues.

Sec. 1. The admission fee shall be five dollars, payable on election. The annual dues shall be five dollars, in advance, payable on or before the Annual Meeting.

Sec. 2. Any member failing to pay her dues on or before the first Quarterly after the Annual Meeting, shall be deprived of her vote. If payment is not made before the next Annual Meeting, her name shall be dropped from the roll of membership, unless upon good reason being given, the Board shall decide to excuse her.

[Of course the admission fee must be fixed upon by every Club for itself. In some Clubs it is only one dollar, and the same in the case of annual dues. The provisions of Sec. 2 are frequently necessary to protect the Society against procrastinating members, as well as against the really dishonorable. A sister in difficulties is always tenderly and delicately treated by a Board, according to my experience.]

ARTICLE VIII.

Elections.

Sec. 1. At the regular meeting preceding the Annual Meeting, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee of five members, whose business it shall be to prepare a ticket for the coming election. For

each office in the club they shall select a candidate who seems to them fitting, and secure her consent to serve before placing her name on the ticket.

SEC. 2. The list thus prepared shall be printed, and one copy given at the opening of the Annual Meeting to each member, who may vote the ticket as prepared, or scratch any name she chooses and write other ones instead.

If there is an opposing party in the club, it may prepare an independent ticket, and distribute to the members on election day, and these ballots shall be collected and counted with the others, due care being taken that no one casts more than one ballot.

SEC. 3. The votes shall be collected, and given to three tellers appointed by the President, who shall retire to another room to count them, while the Club proceeds to hear the reports of its officers.

SEC. 4. When the Chairman of the tellers shall announce herself ready to report, the business in hand shall be suspended, and the list of elected officers be read to the Club.

SEC. 5. Should there be a tie, unless one candidate withdraw her name, the vote may be taken again by ballot-box and written ballots, or the President may be asked to cast the deciding vote, at the discretion of the meeting.

SEC. 6. The newly-elected officers, with the exception of the one taking the place of the Chairman who has the programme for the next meeting in charge, will assume the duties of their position immediately after the close of the meeting, and the retiring officers

shall turn over to their successors all club books and properties in their possession before the end of the month. The Chairman excepted from the above rule, shall do the same at the end of the next meeting.

SEC. 7. All officers shall be elected for one year only, except the Board of Directors. The members of the Board shall be divided into three sets of two members each. The first year two members shall be elected to serve one year, two to serve two years, and two to serve three years. After that election, two will retire each year, and two be elected in their places to serve three years.

SEC. 8. The Board shall elect its own Chairman every year, from its membership.

[The wisdom of this plan of nominating officers, borrowed from the custom in use in men's clubs, becomes more apparent in every year of club experience. If there is an opposing party in the Society, nothing is easier than to make up an independent ticket, as provided in Section 2, and if the Nominating Committee be wisely chosen, it insures the best results for the club.

There is another way in use in some large clubs, which I will briefly explain, and show the defects in its working. By this method the Chairman of the Board (or some other officer) sends to each member, two weeks before election, a blank form to be filled out with her choice for each office in the club, and returned (without her name) to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, appointed as provided in Section 1, by the President. From these returns the Committee makes up the ticket,

which is presented to the members on election day, and voted as in Section 3.

This plan has been warmly received, because it gave each member a hand in the nominations, and was supposed to express the wishes of the club better than any other way. The reasons it has not worked well—in the opinion of thoughtful club women—are these: First, the blanks are not conscientiously used by every member. Many of the older members do not return them, some from carelessness or indifference, others because of that peculiar quality of mind which brands everything arranged by the officers for the society (no matter how wisely or how well) as "cut and dried," and therefore, it is inferred, distasteful.

Again, in a large club there are often many members who are new, unacquainted, and thus ignorant of the ability of members, or their qualifications for office. With the natural desire to do their whole duty in the club, these members never fail to fill out and return their blanks, but laboring under the disadvantage above mentioned, in nine out of ten cases, they take their Manual and copy on the new form the names then in office. Thus they merely vote to re-elect, and thus, it will be seen, the newer members often really decide the nominations. I have seen this work, and I know what I affirm.

A second argument against this method of nomination, is that there is no concerted action, and consequently the vote is a wildly scattering one, the majority in almost every case being, as said above, with those who from ignorance or carelessness copy the list of officers

at that moment in office. This would result, of course, in a constant re-election of the same persons.

The method provided for in Section 1, will, I think, be found entirely satisfactory, insuring the utmost possible freedom of choice, and at the same time protecting the club from hasty, ill-considered nominations. The plan of voting outlined in Sections 2, 3, 4, and 5, has been a perfect success wherever I have seen it tried.

The antiquated way in use in many clubs, of balloting for each officer in turn, is clumsy, unwieldy, and tiresome to the last degree. Moreover, one of its pernicious results is the willingness of the members present, when they become fatigued and anxious to get away, to accept any person, however unfit, who expresses a willingness to fill an office. This can be partly provided against by making it the duty of the Nominating Committee to ascertain positively whether every person whose name is on the ticket is willing to accept the office. But even after that has been done, on the day of balloting a candidate will often withdraw her name, especially if she thinks she shall not be unanimously elected. Then the place is open to nominations from the floor, and the one most eager to get it—for whatever reason—is quite apt to do so. This difficulty occurs, of course, only in large city clubs, where an official position is useful for advertising purposes, or for the publicity thus secured; but it is always well, in adopting a constitution, to provide for the possible future of the society. The provision in Section 7, for election of the Board, has a value that a young club may not appreciate, but will commend itself warmly to an older one. Its object is to keep some

experienced members always in that important body, so that the business of the club shall go smoothly, and not be at any time placed in the hands of raw recruits.]

ARTICLE IX.

AMENDMENTS.

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended at any business meeting, by a two-thirds vote of members present, provided notice of such amendment has been given at the previous business meeting, and a notice of amendment appended to the call for the meeting.

[The requirement of a month or more notice of an amendment proposed, is, of course, to provide against having a change of constitution "sprung upon" the club.]

BY-LAWS.

1. The regular meetings of this Association shall be on the first and third Saturday of every month, excepting June, July, August, and September. They shall be held from two till four o'clock.
2. The meetings on the first Saturday in May, November, January, and March, shall be for the transaction of business, and shall be called Quarterlies.
3. The Quarterly meeting on the first Saturday in May, shall be the Annual Meeting, and shall begin the financial year.
4. At the Annual Meeting, each officer shall read her annual report, and the officers for the following year shall be elected.

5. The regular meetings of the Board shall take place in the Club Committee-room, an hour before each regular meeting.

[The days and hours of meeting must naturally be settled by each club for itself, and the question of summer vacation as well. I have arranged it here as it is most commonly done in large towns, where the summers are unsettled times. The plan of Quarterly Meetings for business will commend itself to any club that admits guests, which I hope all clubs will, as they grow more broad in their scope. Unless a society has a large amount of business, these four in a season will be enough, but when it becomes necessary, a business meeting can alternate with a social one every month.

The object of holding the Annual Meeting at the end of the season, is that the newly elected officers may have the summer to perfect their plans, and make any arrangement they desire for carrying them out.

This arrangement of Quarterly Meetings is for clubs which prefer to have a hand in the business as it goes on. I strongly recommend—and my preference is warranted by the facts—(see Chap. XI., the "Board of Directors") that, with the exception of the election of officers, a club should place the whole of its business, even the admission of members, in the hands of its Board exclusively. I believe business would be more conscientiously done, and that more care would be exercised over the entrance of members, while an annual change in the membership of the Board would protect the club against anything of the nature of a "ring."]

6. Members shall be allowed to bring to meetings (except Quarterlies) as many guests as they choose, unless, owing to the size of the room, the Board is obliged to limit the number.

[I need not say more than I have in Chap. XI., regarding the use and importance of admitting guests.]

7. In the discussion which follows a paper, and in Business Meetings, no member shall speak longer than five minutes at a time, nor more than twice on any one point, unless permission is asked, and granted by the President.

[The use of this regulation will appear when a club gets into warm debate, and the loudest and most persistent talker holds the floor.]

8. A member wishing to sever her connection with the club, must send a written resignation to the Board, which will accept and report it at the next Business Meeting.

[This formality is necessary in order that a club may know who are members, and who have chosen to resign. Some persons think that simply staying away, and not paying dues, ends their membership, but this should not be accepted as a resignation.]

9. The Order of Exercises for Regular Meetings:
   1. Call to order.
   2. The Minutes of the last meeting by the Recording Secretary.
   3. Reading of letters, or anything of interest by Corresponding Secretary.

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4. Announcement of subject for next meeting.
5. The Paper.
6. Discussion.
7. Adjournment.

10. The Order of Exercises for Business Meetings:
    1. Call to order.
    2. Minutes of the last Business Meeting.
    3. Letters, or anything of interest, by Corresponding Secretary.
    4. Election of new members.
    5. Reports of Standing Committees.
    6. Reports of Special Committees.
    7. Unfinished business.
    8. New business.
    9. Adjournment.
11. Order of Business for Annual Meetings:
    1. Call to order.
    2. Report of Nominating Committee, and distribution of tickets.
    3. Appointment of Tellers, and collection of tickets.
    4. Report of President.
    5. Report of Recording Secretary.
    6. Report of Corresponding Secretary.
    7. Report of Treasurer.
    8. Report of Chairman of the Board.
    9. Report of Chairman of Standing Committees.
    10. Report of Tellers.
    11. Adjournment.
12. The Rules of Order as laid down in shall be the rules of this Club.

[A club must select its own Manual. Cushing's Manual, which has so long been a standard, has—so far

as I have observed—been unsatisfactory. Roberts' Rules of Order has been adopted by some of the most intelligent clubs at the West. Warrington's Manual is in use also. I am glad to say that a book containing the elementary forms of parliamentary procedure, with special reference to the conduct of Woman's Clubs, will be published during the year. The author is Mrs. Harriette R. Shattuck, President of the Boston Political Class, and an experienced club woman. It will be called "The Alphabet of Parliamentary Law," and published by Lee & Shepard, Boston.]

Changing this Constitution.—If a club desires to place all the business, except the election of officers (as I recommend), in the hands of its Board of Directors, it will have to make the following changes in this Constitution:

Article IV., Sec. 1, should read, "The Board of Directors shall transact all the business of the Club, elect its members, and have access to the books of Secretaries and Treasurer at all times."

Article VI., Sec. 3, should read, "The name shall be received and considered by the Board, and voted upon at its next regular meeting."

Sec. 4 and Sec. 5 should be omitted.

By-Law 2 should be omitted.

By-Law 3 should read, "The first meeting in May shall be the Annual Meeting, etc."

By-Law 4 omitted.

By-Law 5, "except the Quarterlies," should be omitted.

The Order of Exercises for Business Meetings should be omitted.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ORIGIN, WORK, AND WORTH OF THE GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS.

By Charlotte Emerson Brown,

President of The General Federation of Women's Clubs.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs is the natural and logical outcome of local club organizations by women. And the whole movement, general and local, is one of the results of a long course of preparation through which the world is passing.

Three hundred years ago the frosts and glaciers of ignorance, superstition, and semi-barbarism, that for ages had well-nigh entombed the world, began to melt away. Mind, in the more favored nations, began to awake from its long slumber. Although there have since been eddies and counter-currents in the great stream of progress, yet the deep undertow and general current have been ever setting toward a higher and truer civilization. During these centuries, governments, religion, literature, science, and civilization itself, have changed. God, in his providence, has been making all things new. As subterraneous upheavals have lifted, gradually, the mountain ranges that crown the earth, so have the great intellectual and moral forces that have

been in operation, brought about corresponding changes in the world of mind.

Nowhere have these changes been more marked and wonderful than in their relations to woman. She is being raised from a position of insignificance and irresponsibility to one of prominence and power. Women are becoming educated, and this is the golden key that unlocks their prison door. Fifty years ago the idea prevailed that education for girls, except to a limited extent, and of a superficial character, was money wasted. Now it begins to be seen that girls should be educated equally with boys; and schools and colleges are provided for that end. Those who began and encouraged this higher education for girls "builded better than they knew." When girls were educated they began to think; they felt their restraints, and they experienced an inward consciousness of greater possibilities for women than had yet been attained. The power of God came upon them. They conversed together, and then began to organize for work along different lines, as opportunity, inclination, or a sense of duty seemed to dictate.

Among these organizations Women's Clubs for literary, social, and moral improvement, hold a very conspicuous place. It is a significant fact that while other classes of women's organizations have met with ridicule, and almost every species of opposition, the women's literary club movement has, since its real object became known, been looked upon with favor by men and women alike.

Women's Literary Clubs have had a history of about

twenty-five years. They were few, and, to an extent, experimental at first. But when the idea was comprehended it met everywhere a quick response. Women's Literary Clubs were soon formed in nearly every State, if not town, of the nation. They now exist by hundreds and are increasing in number, and in efficiency, every day. Many of the larger cities have now each from ten to thirty women's clubs for literary purposes. These clubs are not composed of educated women alone; they are for all who have natural ability, and a desire for improvement. Society women in large numbers are coming into them. The frivolity that has existed among women is greatly diminished. Women who were strangers to each other, or who were separated by sect, or prejudice, are now drawn into loving sympathy and mutual helpfulness. So popular have women's clubs become that it is now considered to be "quite the thing" to be in membership with them.

When these women's clubs were greatly multiplied and spread over the land, there began, naturally, to grow up among them a desire for fellowship and comparison of methods. This desire, because the clubs were isolated and strange to each other, and because there was no medium of communication, could not be realized. Very soon the idea of some general federation that should leave each club free to carry on its own work in its own way, and yet should bring the clubs together for fellowship and mutual helpfulness, began to be talked of as both desirable and practicable. Why, it was asked, since all other local interests of a given class are organized for mutual helpfulness, should not women's

literary clubs, in some simple, natural way, be federated for the helpfulness of each and for the general cause.

Sorosis, of New York, was the first to catch the thought that was still fugitive, and put it into some definite form. On her twenty-first anniversary Sorosis sent out an invitation to as many literary clubs as she had knowledge of, to meet in convention in New York as her guests. The convention assembled March 18, 1889. About sixty clubs were represented; and they all came with written reports of their own club work. After three days of delightful consultation it became evident, before the formal vote was taken, that a large majority of the clubs favored the organization of a General Federation of Women's Clubs. The vote to that effect was unanimous; and after adopting a series of resolutions, embodying general principles around which the Federation was to be organized, a committee of seventeen, from different sections of the country, was appointed to take the subject in charge. This general committee was authorized to appoint, and did appoint from its own number, a committee of seven, with instructions to collect facts, learn the wishes of the clubs, prepare a provisional constitution, and then, one year later, call a second convention of clubs to review their work and complete, if they deemed it desirable, the proposed organization. That convention, also by invitation of Sorosis, convened in New York April 23, 1890. About sixty clubs responded by sending reports and delegates. The convention met at Scottish Rites Hall, and continued three days, holding three sessions each day. A constitution and by-laws were adopted, officers were elected,

and the General Federation of Women's Clubs was formally organized. It included then about sixty clubs, from eighteen States. The full minutes of that convention were published in the Convention Number of the *Cycle*, and have been widely circulated.

The whole movement thus far was preparatory and experimental. It is one thing to possess an excellent instrument; it is another to know how to use it to the best possible advantage. Nothing, however good, goes of itself. A great responsibility was thrown at once upon the Advisory Board, and they set themselves earnestly to consider by what methods the Federation could best do the work for which it had been organized. The maturing of plans required time for reflection, and extensive correspondence. It was clearly settled that the Federation should not seem to belong to the Advisory Board, nor be under the direction of any select few. Every club, small and large, should be alike consulted, and it should be the purpose of the officers to ascertain and carry out the wishes of the clubs. Many clubs had not yet come into membership, and it was desirable that such of these as might wish to join should do so while the Federation was yet in a plastic state, and have part in giving it permanent form and character. To secure this the imparting of information was of immediate importance. Questions had to be answered, explanations made, and reasons given, showing the importance of the organization, and the benefit it would be to individual clubs and to the general cause. Those who had thought much upon the subject, and especially those who had attended the two New York conventions, needed no

further convincing; but the majority of all the clubs of the land had not been so represented, and the whole question was new to them, and so, for one reason and another, many naturally hesitated, and waited for more light. Summer vacations came on immediately, so that little, comparatively, could be done until the autumn following. Then a booklet containing constitution and by-laws, lists of officers, and federated clubs, and a statement by the Advisory Board, was printed and widely circulated. Committees for correspondence in each State were appointed, the largest federated club in the State being asked to nominate its chairman. The chairman, when appointed, was to fill her own committee from the federated clubs of her own State. These committees were expected to put themselves in communication with women's literary clubs within their bounds, to circulate documents of the Federation, to encourage federation where this seemed desirable, to assist in club organization where counsel was needed, to be in frequent correspondence with the Advisory Board, and to do whatever else the general interests of the Federation might call for.

These combined operations have greatly deepened and extended the interest in women's literary club work, and in the Federation itself, throughout the country. Evidence of this is found in the fact that many clubs have recently joined the Federation, that others are constantly coming, and that others still, are in correspondence with reference to joining in the near future. At the organization in April, 1890, eighteen States were represented; eight months later there were

twenty-five. About sixty clubs joined in the organization, and a few months later the number rose to one hundred, representing twenty-five different States. Apparently the Federation ship has but just left port on her long and, I trust, prosperous voyage for the promotion of women's advancement.

What, in addition to increase of membership, improved organization, and more widely extended information, has the Federation already accomplished; and what may it be expected to achieve in the near future? The Federation is doing for local clubs what local clubs are doing for individual members. It is waking them up to a more earnest life. It helps them to see that they are not an isolated band, working by and for themselves, but parts of a great whole, bound together in the bonds of love and sympathy. Federated clubs are not strangers but sisters, working for a common cause, each aiding the other and seeking aid in turn. This feeling of fellowship is a source of joy and of power. For a club to realize that it is one link of a golden chain that binds it in fellowship and influence with a hundred others, is itself inspiring and ennobling. A magnetic current pulsates every hand and heart that enters the charmed circle, and creates *esprit de corps*. This is a greater gain than most people realize. It cannot be expressed in cold words, but its absence or presence in this club movement is just the difference that we see, but cannot explain, between death and life.

That the General Federation is breathing a new life into the federated clubs, is most evident to those who

are privileged to read, extensively, the club correspondence that goes on with constantly increasing volume. Two or three sentences from as many letters must suffice as illustration. One from California says:

"I beg that our Club may be supplied promptly with Federation news or documents that may be issued, that would put us transmontanes more *en rapport* with our Eastern co-laborers. We all take an intense interest in the Federation of Clubs, as promising that dissemination of all good ideas among all sisterhoods which cannot but brighten our brains and inspire even our local work with a sense of largeness given by national, instead of sectional, co-operation."

Another from Utah:

"Our situation has cut us off from outside influences. Until recently we have not realized that our devotion to the club idea was repeated hundreds of times in the country, and was inspired by an impulse common to all thoughtful American women. We are anxious to receive all the help and inspiration that may come from organization and interchange of thought. We hail with delight the plan of a permanent Federation of women's clubs, and shall be glad to have a share in the work."

A third from Ohio:

"Accustomed as we are to a quiet sort of delving, the suggestion of joining the General Federation comes upon us like a pull into the light. We still blink a little and are not prepared to say how well we can stand comparison with the more pretentious bodies; but the call seems a pleasant one, and so far as we can

lend a hand, or grasp one, in this agreeable phase of women's associations we shall be happy to do so. Our club accepts with pleasure a place in the Federation."

Olympia Washington writes: "The membership of our Club in the Federation has had the effect of awakening ambition, for after having been my most welcome guest for nearly eight years, it has now decided to incorporate under the laws of the State, for the purpose, among others, of acquiring real estate and building a club house."

It would be easy to fill a volume with such letters, all going to show that the Federation is an inspiration to the federated clubs. Club correspondence and all club documents are carefully preserved in the archives of the Federation, those of each club in its own apartment. They will some day make a collection of intrinsic interest and value, that may furnish the historian of our Federation valuable information.

Clubs for literary, social, and moral culture, that have not joined the Federation, are yet profited by it. The very fact that such an organization is known to exist, and that a hundred clubs, by federating, have joined hands to help each other, is a fact well calculated to interest and impress all who are enlisted in the same class of work. Clubs that are not drawn into the sisterhood will feel somewhat of its warmth and glow, and so share, in part, its inspiring influence.

The relation of this federated club movement to other classes of women's organizations, and to women's work in general, is evident. The intellectual training obtained in clubs is fitting club women for position and

usefulness in every other line of good work. Indeed, the literary club is a training-school for usefulness outside of club life. Go into the various organizations of women as we find them engaged, in missionary work, or in the temperance cause, or in any department of benevolent effort, and when you find how many of these workers have been trained in women's clubs for great efficiency, it is clearly seen that the benefits of the General Federation extend, and are meant to extend, beyond the federated clubs into all other outside organizations of women.

Even men feel the influence of this Federation of clubs. Some classes of women's organizations, men have not taken to encouragingly. But to this work, as soon as they understood its real aim and end, they have been ready to lend a hand. Men have come to appreciate women's power, ability, and fitness to enter into broader fields of influence than hitherto they have occupied. They are being almost forced into prominence by men as they would not be but for their club training. Here women learn to think consecutively, and to speak with freedom and eloquence. Men see this, and "nothing succeeds like success."

Already this Federation of Clubs is a power in the land. That power accumulates as the years roll on, and when the twentieth century dawns it will be many times greater than it is to-day.

The Constitution of the Federation provides for the holding of biennial meetings. At these gatherings all the clubs from every section of the land are expected to have representation, by delegates if practicable, other-

wise by letter. It appears to be thought by many that the chief interest and worth of the Federation is to centre in its biennial meetings. But what would the biennials be without the two years of earnest work that lie behind them? What would college graduation be but for the years of drill that lie back of it! Standing as I do, looking over the whole field, and seeing what goes on, I feel sure that should the Federation disband to-day, the good work it has already accomplished would more than repay all it has cost; but it will not disband. Should it do so, another would be immediately organized to take its place. When we consider what it is doing, the only wonder is that it was not organized years sooner. It has come to stay, and clubs that have been looking on to see whether it had life or not, if there be such, had best step aboard and help from near the start to steer the ship, and shape its character and course.

In these words I do not mean to speak lightly of the biennial gatherings. They will be great historic events. Many of the representative women of the nation will be there and in consultation. They will come with their richest thoughts to instruct and encourage the federated sisterhood. All members and all clubs will stand together on an equality. Acquaintanceships will be formed that will prove to many a life-long memory and satisfaction. When delegates return home they will carry, not the report only of what they have seen and heard, but the spirit of the occasion. Their clubs will be thrilled by their recitals and will profit by what they hear. Yes, the Biennial is the supreme hour of the Federation;

but it is only so because what shall have been done in the intervening periods will be great enough to make the Biennial great. Ours is no holiday work for holiday occasions; but, when the holiday does come, let every club enjoy it, because it shall be worthy of the enjoyment.

My hope is that literary clubs all over the land, with few, if any exceptions, will study carefully the work and influence of the General Federation, and that they will find so much to approve, and so little to condemn, even while we are on unexplored ground, that they will very soon be glad to come into membership. The general organization has no designs ulterior to those expressed in its constitution. It knows no sect or "doxy" in religion, and no hobby or party in politics or reform. The only topics it does not entertain and discuss are party politics and sectarian religion. From this it does not follow that federated club women are indifferent to religion, to the call of patriotism, or to the claims of philanthropy. Theirs is the religion of enlightened love —love of God, of home, of country, and of mankind. On this broad platform let our federated sisterhood stand together, and, with earnest purpose, and sacred regard for duty, advance along another decade into the higher privileges and responsibilities of the near future. The twentieth century, with beckoning hand, awaits our coming.

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And doubling overhead their little fists
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Stupidly yawned upon the other." SHELLEY.

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"Incessu patuit dea." VIRGIL.

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And master the devil, or throw him out
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Definition of Greek word:—"breath, or spirit." GREEK LEXICON.

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"Waste not your hour, nor in vain pursuit
Of this and that endeavor and dispute;
Better be jocund with the fruitful grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, fruit." OMAR KHAYYAM.

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"From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began;
From harmony to harmony
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The diapason closing full in man." DRYDEN.

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